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SONGS of
North and South

BY WALTER MALONE

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SONGS of *North and South*

By WALTER MALONE

*Author of "Songs of Dusk and Dawn,"
"Songs of December and June,"
"The Coming of the King," Etc.*

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Walter Malone



TO

Madison Cawein

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SONGS OF NORTH AND SOUTH.

TO AN UNKNOWN READER.

IN years to come, when I have passed away,
Your careless glance upon this page may fall;
So then, my unknown reader, pause, I pray,
And hearken to my faint and far-off call.

O youth, as graceful as a willow bough,
As gladsome as a fawn with nimble feet;
O youth, with noble alabaster brow,
Flushed with your morning splendor, fresh and sweet:—

Dear boy, mine ears shall never know your voice,
Mine eyes shall never know your princely grace,
And I shall never in your smile rejoice,
And never, never see your fine frank face.

O maiden, with the starry eyes of brown,
With golden ringlets, peach-bloom cheeks aglow;
O maiden, wearing love's and beauty's crown,
As radiant as a sunrise over snow:—

Dear girl, I never by your side shall tread,
And never shall I hear your gentle sighs;
I never shall behold your lips of red,
And never, never see your splendid eyes.

To an Unknown Reader

I love you, though our paths shall never meet,
Though you shall flourish after I have fled,
Though living voices seem to you more sweet
Than lays of him deserted with the dead.

For you, the birds and blossoms of the day,
For you, the brilliance of the banquet halls ;
For me, the lonesome churchyard, old and gray,
For me, the prison under charnel walls.

For you, the light, the life, the music, mirth,
For you, love's triumph and love's sweet, sweet pain ;
For me, a pillow in the gloomy earth,
For me, the sobbing of the midnight rain.

Will you neglect me in that far-off day ?
Shall I forgotten and forsaken lie ?
Ah, then my heart should bleed, though turned to clay,
And that would be another death to die.

O unknown reader, for your sake I pine ;
Beside you let me cease my wandering.
I love you ; let me take your hand in mine,
And tell you stories, laugh or weep or sing.

For you I suffered in far-distant days ;
For you I lost man's favor, maiden's hand ;
For you my feet forsook their boyhood ways ;
For you I wandered through the stranger's land.

From death's dark empire shall my soul depart,
Your smile, your friendship, and your love to win ;
Behold ! I come and knock upon your heart :
For God's sake, reader, rise and let me in !

The Lore of Love

THE LORE OF LOVE.

I

WHEN do I love thee ? When the brooklets run
Through dandelion meadows of the June ;
When horns of huntsmen greet the harvest moon,
And mellow Autumn's vintaging is done ;
When Spring's triumphant marches have begun,
When Winter winds through haggard branches croon ;
At solemn midnight and at silvery noon,
At blush of morning and at set of sun.

Thy youthful splendor unto me is dear,
But I shall love thee still when youth flits by ;
I love thee when thine eyes know not a tear,
And love thee when Disaster hovers nigh ;
My soul shall crave thee when the Dark draws near,
And still be loyal through eternity.

II

How do I love thee ? As the slender lyre
Thrills with emotion when the breezes blow ;
As roses love the morning's golden glow,
As dewy stars the dusky night desire ;
As eagles to the heaven of heavens aspire,
As doves dream fondly, breast to breast below ;
As arctic pines love everlasting snow,
As tropic palms love everlasting fire.

I love thee as the victor loves his wreath,
The peasant loves his cottage, free from strife ;
I love thee as Mortality loves breath,
The shepherd boy his harp and flute and fife ;
As disappointed Hope loves welcome Death,
As human souls love Everlasting Life.

Melba

III

Why do I love thee ? Ask the artist there
Why does he love fair faces that he paints ;
Ask of the poet why his spirit faints
Before his heroines of the golden hair ;
Ask of the singer, why his sweet despair,
His glorious gladness, his melodious plaints ;
Ask the young priest, before his haloed saints,
To lay the secret of his worship bare.

I love thee ; for I long to soar from sod,
And tread in glory of celestial grace ;
To live beyond the time my grave is trod,
Proving a crown-prince of immortal race ;
To emulate beatitudes of God,
To reach His kingdom, and behold His face.

MELBA.

IN radiating circles all aglow,
The galleries glitter like a Northern light ;
Electric torches wreath the stage below
Like royal gems of some Arabian night.

I see the silks and satins swirling by
With misty laces and aerial plumes,
And diamonds palpitating far and nigh
Through bowers of a paradise of blooms.

Blue eyes outbeam the sapphire's bluish spark,
O'er feathery fans like doves a-flutter there ;
Tiaras glimmer over tresses dark,
And moon-like pearls on moon-like maids more fair.

The curtain rises on a splendid scene
Amid the plaudits of that splendid throng,
And then She comes, of queenly beings Queen,
World-famous Empress of the world of song.

Melba

O stately singer, from thy magic voice
The present, like a dreary dream, hath fled,
In glories that have perished we rejoice,
And transcendental splendors that were dead.

I hear a wild swan's piercing melodies
At shrine of Venus, on the Cyprian shore,—
Dying in glory under diamond skies
When Venus, Queen of Beauty, reigns no more.

In Persian gardens, under golden moons,
I hear the nightingale still woo the rose,
Though faded are their far, forgotten Junes,
And twice five hundred years have healed their woes.

By mediæval castle, thrilled with bliss, .
I see the lovers trysting through the dark ;
In odorous dewy dusk I see them kiss,
Till startled by the lyric of the lark.

O thou hast suffered, peerless Queen of Song,
And thrilled with keener than terrestrial joy,
Hast loved and languished, borne the yoke of Wrong,
And seen stern Fate thy noble hopes destroy.

Upon thy brow the white swan lives again,
And in thy lips the perished Persian rose,
Within thy heart the nightingale's own pain,
And in thy soul the dear dead lover's woes.

The music ceases, and I wake to find
The dull, dry story of our sordid life,
The same old ways, where blind men lead the blind
Through all the selfsame sorrow, toil and strife.

Alas, to think that voice must pass away,
And leave no marvel of thy matchless art,

Florida Nocturne

And never, never, after this short day,
One breathing being shall those strains impart !

Alas, to think those lips shall then be dumb,
That glorious name be graven on the tomb,
And never, never, through the years to come
Those notes divine shall vibrate through the gloom !

But, peerless lady, like thy silver songs,
The stateliest empires soon must pass away,
With all the murmur of their mighty throngs
Like chirp of insects on a Summer day.

Then princely Paris, radiant realm of art,
Shall be abandoned in a waste alone,
Manhattan but a long-forgotten mart,
And lordly London but a heap of stone.

Yet perfume can not pass to nothingness,
No blush on blossom ever come to naught ;
In some far Spring, beneath a beam's caress,
They live again, with soulful sweetness fraught.

No song, no poem ever thrilled in vain,
Nor word of kindness, lover's smile or sigh :
The True and Good and Beautiful remain,
And Love lives on, though lovers all must die.

So no thing beautiful is lost in death ;
All that returns for which our souls repine ;
Fadeless thy laurel and thy myrtle wreath,
O peerless Empress of the voice divine !

FLORIDA NOCTURNE.

THROUGH midnight shadows purple-brown,
The stars are peeping open-eyed ;
There in her glowing silvery gown
The moon comes like a radiant bride.

Florida Nocturne

Now sweet and clear
From citron coppice near,
I hear a mocking-bird repine
In gurgle, gurgle, gurgle of his melodies divine.

From lemon orchards, starred with blooms,
And bending low with fragrant fruit,
Soft odors haunt the purple glooms
Like whispers of a lover's lute.

I wait alone
For you, for you, my own,
With love more spirit-like and sweet
Than all the fragile blossoms that I scatter at your
feet.

Through green pomegranate trees
I see the swelling globes of gold ;
Through jasmine vines I feel the breeze
Trip like a cherub, silken-stoled ;
Magnolias loom
With creamy clouds of bloom ;
With pining they are pale, my dear,
But not more pale with pining than the one who
waits you here.

The orange fruit swings on the trees,
The sprays of orange scent the air ;
Gold apples of Hesperides,
I bring their blooms to wreath your hair !
Hark to the trill
Of yon lone whip-poor-will,
Reminding by his mournful tune,
That Youth and Love and Joy must pass, so soon,
so soon, so soon !

The orange odors soon must faint,
The lemon blossoms soon must die,
The mocking-bird must end his plaint,
Magnolias, fading, flutter by.

Mississippi in June

Then come, sweet mate,
Before it be too late !
While Youth is blissful, Love divine,
O maiden of the flower-like face, be mine, be mine,
be mine !

MISSISSIPPI IN JUNE.

THE blithe breezes croon through forests of June,
And the swallows skim on through the sky ;
Then the goldfinch comes and the wild bee hums,
While the martins go sailing on high.
The indigo bird in the hedge is heard
As he seeks for his sweetheart and sings,
And the tanagers flush and the redbirds blush
Like a flurry of tulips with wings.

The cotton-field heaves with its glossy green leaves,
With its blossoms of crimson and cream,
While the corn's sharp spears with their juicy ears
And their tassels of silk are astream.
The cantaloupe swells, and the cantaloupe smells
Like a gold-carven casket of musk ;
On the watermelon vine is a flagon of wine
In the rosy-red heart of the husk.

The blackberries lush hang ripe on the bush
Like a gypsy girl's ebon-hued eyes,
While the strawberry bed is sprinkled with red
For the barefooted truant's surprise.
The apricot glows like a yellow rose,
And the apple a globule of gold,
While the damson's dark blue and the cherry's red hue
Stain the beak of the woodpecker bold.

With pansies aglow, peonies ablow,
Cometh June in her maidenhood sweet,
And I see her glide where the crape myrtles bide
With their petals as pink as her feet.

July Noontide

The magnolia bloom, like an ostrich plume,
Is a-waving to welcome the queen,
And the iris rears through its serried spears
Like a banner through bayonets keen.

JULY NOONTIDE.

AN Oriental Sultan, July comes
In all the brilliance of barbaric state,
While bumble bees and locusts beat their drums,
And shrill grasshoppers at his call await.

And like Sultanas listening for his tread,
In gorgeous harems, splendid salvias flame ;
His marigolds, in yellow and in red,
Put Sheba and Semiramis to shame.

There, rank on rank, the bright geraniums burn
With pungent, sultry, suffocating breath,
And hardy buff and orange zinnias yearn
To crown the Master with a gaudy wreath.

Petunias, garnet-hued and white and pied,
From dewy trumpets to the Caliph drink ;
Verbenas, closely clustered at their side,
Weave him rich rugs in purple and in pink.

Above the rest, slim oleanders rise
Like rosy-footed dancers, full of grace,
And passion flowers with their peacock eyes
Climb on the wall, enrobed in azure lace.

The humming-bird, a corsair, flashes by,
His ruby throat glows like a wingéd blush ;
The cockscomb, a muezzin there on high,
Uplifts his turban, made of crimson plush.

August in Tennessee

July strews watermelons by yon fence
More luscious than mellifluous nectar old,
Muskmelons with their fragrant frankincense,
More tempting than Hesperian fruit of gold.

Dewberries burst with black fermenting juice,
While over-ripe raspberries fast decay,
And, like freebooters in a field aloose,
The hornets suck their sugary sweets away.

We long to leave this surfeit of perfume,
This glare of color and this blaze of heat,
And tread by pools in leafy woodland gloom
Through dewy grasses, with our cool bare feet.

There we should see marsh lilies pure and white,
And feathery ferns o'erhanging silver springs,
Brooks bubbling through the mint, the grove's green night,
And pale daturas, wan as moth wings.

The broad-leaved pawpaws with their green young fruit,
Blue velvet ageratum by the streams,
Tall cottonwoods and live oaks dark and mute,
Would be our comrades, as we dozed in dreams.

So, when with passion, human hearts may burn,
And anger chokes the soul with dust and heat,
To Contemplation's greenwoods we may turn,
And see her lilies in their cool retreat.

AUGUST IN TENNESSEE.

ALONG the rustic fences, hoary mulleins lift their heads,
The pompous cornfield pumpkin, saffron-blossomed,
sprawls and spreads ;
The orange-tinted love-vine weaves its tangled waxen maze ;
The wild peas, phlox and milkweed fringe the dusty country
ways.

August in Tennessee

Like Autumn leaves are warblers, gray and dappled, red and brown;
Like flying dandelions, bright goldfinches flutter down ;
The crimson grosbeaks glimmer like a swirl of blushing snow ;
The purple buntings gather like a cloud of indigo.

The woodbine sprays are twining in a red and yellow wreath ;
The heliotrope breathes odors like my sweetheart's gentle breath ;
Crape myrtles, blushing, flushing, imitate her cheeks aglow,
And dahlias, wan and waxen, simulate her brows of snow.

Blonde, moon-faced August, crowned with golden-clustered scuppernongs,
Comes through the hazy harvest, greeted by the reapers' songs,
And fills a beaded goblet at the quaint old cider mill,
Where, in a creamy cascade, nectars trickle, ooze and spill.

I love to linger hidden where no sun-lance pierces through,
Where clematis entangles with its billowy blooms of blue,
Where hale Virginia creeper with the cool wistaria twines,
Till noon is green as emerald in the night of verdant vines.

But outside, purple pansies wither in the blinding heat,
And fierce on whitened houses, furnace fervors blaze and beat ;
The thick madeira festoons, once so glossy, lush and strong,
On parching porch and pillars creep with wilted sprays along.

In August, all the summer seems to surfeit and to tire ;
In August, all emotions seem to crisp with scorching fire ;
In August, seem to vanish all the dew-crowned hopes of yore ;
In August, life grows real, and the old dreams come no more.

September in Tennessee

SEPTEMBER IN TENNESSEE.

THE sad September comes with asters in her auburn hair,
Her lovely face transfigured with a gentle touch of care,
With pale blue morning-glories, paler than her pale blue eyes,
And pearly hillside hazes, dimmer than her dreamy skies.

She comes with cataracts of amber honeysuckles sweet,
With golden-rods that powder all her garments and her feet,
With humming-birds for heralds, all bedecked in starry scales,
With glow of jewelled armor, burnished throats and twinkling tails.

Amid her forest depths, like white-limbed giants in the land,
The clean athletic sycamores in naked grandeur stand ;
And now the sweetgum overflows with aromatic drops,
While pungent sassafras perfumes the bramble-tangled copse.

Pecans on bending branches hang their wealth of clustered nuts,
And chinquepins and hazels ripen by the negro huts ;
The brown buckeyes are swelling, purple wild-grapes swinging low,
And sumach berries by the fence like blood-red torches glow.

But now the year has lost the gladness of her girlhood time,
And prose of homely Autumn follows Spring and Summer rhyme ;

Deserted by the song-birds, hang her melancholy bowers,
And like a cobweb curtain swing her deathly-pale moon-flowers.

The lonesome cat-tails quiver by the marsh's dreary wave,
And nightshade sprays are rising by the proud peony's grave.
Beneath the Summer blossoms that have withered into brown,
Our bygone Summer blisses in the dust are trampled down.

October in Tennessee

A smothered Desdemona, here the lily hangs her head,
The iron-weed, a huge Othello, scowling by her bed ;
And, like a ghostly Romeo, calls a lonesome whip-poor-will
To some forgotten Juliet in her grave on yonder hill.

OCTOBER IN TENNESSEE.

FAR, far away, beyond a hazy height,
The turquoise skies are hung in dreamy sleep ;
Below, the fields of cotton, fleecy-white,
Are spreading like a mighty flock of sheep.

Now, like Aladdin of the days of old,
October robes the weeds in purple gowns ;
He sprinkles all the sterile fields with gold,
And all the rustic trees wear royal crowns.

The straggling fences all are interlaced
With pink and azure morning-glory blooms,
The starry asters glorify the waste,
While grasses stand on guard with pikes and plumes.

Yet still amid the splendor of decay
The chill winds call for blossoms that are dead,
The cricket chirps for sunshine passed away,
And lovely summer songsters that have fled.

And lonesome in a haunt of withered vines,
Amid the flutter of her withered leaves,
Pale Summer for her perished Kingdom pines,
And all the glories of her golden sheaves.

In vain October wooes her to remain
Within the palace of his scarlet bowers,
Entreats her to forget her heart-break pain,
And weep no more above her faded flowers.

Autumn in the South

At last November, like a Conqueror, comes
To storm the golden city of his foe ;
We hear his rude winds, like the roll of drums,
Bringing their desolation and their woe.

The sunset, like a vast vermillion flood,
Splashes its giant glowing waves on high,
The forest flames with foliage red as blood,
A conflagration sweeping to the sky.

Then all the treasures of that brilliant state
Are gathered in a mighty funeral pyre ;
October, like a King resigned to fate,
Dies in his forests, with their sunset fire.

AUTUMN IN THE SOUTH.

THIS livelong day I listen to the fall
Of hickory nuts and acorns to the ground,
The croak of rain-crows and the bluejay's call,
The woodman's axe that hews with muffled sound.

And like a spendthrift in a threadbare coat
That still retains a dash of crimson hue,
An old woodpecker chatters forth a note
About the better summer days he knew.

Across the road a ruined cabin stands,
With ragweeds and with thistles at its door,
While withered cypress vines hang tattered strands
About its falling roof and rotting floor.

In yonder forest nook no sound is heard
Save when the walnuts patter on the earth,
Or when by winds the hectic leaves are stirred
To dance like witches in their maniac mirth.

Autumn in the South

Down in the orchard hang the golden pears,
 Half honeycombed by yellow-hammer beaks;
Near by, a dwarfed and twisted apple bears
 Its fruit, brown-red as Amazonian cheeks.

The lonesome landscape seems as if it yearned
 Like our own aching hearts, when first we knew
The one love of our life was not returned,
 Or first we found an old-time friend untrue.

At last the night comes, and the broad white moon
 Is welcomed by the owl with frenzied glee;
The fat opossum, like a satyr, soon
 Blinks at its light from yon persimmon tree.

The raccoon starts to hear long-dreaded sounds
 Amid his scattered spoils of ripened corn—
The cry of negroes and the yelp of hounds,
 The wild rude pealing of a hunter's horn.

At last a gray mist covers all the land
 Until we seem to wander in a cloud,
Far, far away upon some elfin strand
 Where Sorrow drapes us in a mildewed shroud.

No voice is heard in field or forest nigh
 To break the desolation of the spell,
Save one sad mocking-bird in boughs near by,
 Who sings like Tasso in his madman's cell;

While one magnolia blossom, ghostly white,
 Like high-born Leonora, lingering there,
Haughty and splendid in the lonesome night,
 Is pale with passion in her dumb despair.

December Twilight

DECEMBER TWILIGHT.

FAR-OFF, in ashen-clouded skies
The smouldering sunset faintly glows,
With pearly tints and crimson dyes,
Like blushes on a fading rose.
From cedar trees the snowbirds cry,
Their feathers ruffled in the cold;
The shivering sheep-flocks gather nigh,
Or straggle bleating to their fold.

Chrysanthemums along the walks
Their gorgeous bygone glories shed,
And hang from black, decaying stalks
Sprays yellow, purple, white and red.
Their pungent fragrance as it dies
Recalls the springtime songs of old,
Primroses under summer skies,
The autumn orchard's mellow gold.

And like an etching clearly traced
In airy lines against the West,
The fragile twigs are interlaced,
Lifting a little shattered nest.
The glory of the gray-haired year
Is ruined with December's blight,
Like this frail nest that lingers here,
Forsaken in the winter night.

A MISSISSIPPI SWAMP.

HERE in this sultry summer afternoon
The white light through the shade seems
gloomy green:
Here lies, all motionless, the long lagoon,
Through twilight where no sun is ever seen.

A Mississippi Swamp

What lonesomeness, what weight of solitude !
As solemn as those far primeval days
When earth was teeming with a giant brood,
Still unprofaned by man's intrusive gaze.

Huge turtles bask by yonder sluggish lake,
A hoarse bull-frog is croaking on the bank,
And like a jeweled necklace swings a snake
Amid the mosses of a cypress dank.

Here like a shipmast rooted in the soil,
A sycamore defies the future gales ;
Gigantic grape-vines, twisting coil on coil,
Have weaved his cordage and his mighty sails.

A scarlet splash of color, here and there
The trumpet-blossom's flag is all aflame ;
Beside this stream, the cardinal flowers glare
Like eyes of tigers none can ever tame.

Here a magnolia with resplendent buds
Seems a green billow strewing peerless pearls,
Or bearing flocks of swans on emerald floods,
A-flutter in a maze of snowy swirls.

The sluggish waters, green with curdled scum,
Are glorified by lilied robes of white —
Lilies so pure, so lovely, that they come
Like myriad moons in some enchanted night.

The purple bunting that is glinting by
Seems like a pansy that can soar and sing ;
The scarlet tanager that flutters nigh
Seems like a poppy warbling on the wing.

The redbird, like a crimson shooting star,
Burns on the vision with a blaze intense ;
And, like two jeweled daggers, from afar
Two humming-birds pierce through the shadows dense.

Vega

The yellow-hammer for a moment glints,
A golden-breasted, dotted autumn leaf ;
The oriole, in black and orange tints,
Glows through the greenwood like a flaming sheaf.

The hermit-thrush, that forest Hamlet, sings,
Asking the old, old questions, ever new,
Yet still unanswered by created things,
And hid forever out of mortal view.

VEGA.

ON Vega, lovely Eden of the skies,
The fields are flecked with lilies pure as snow ;
Bedecked with diamond crowns, the peaks arise
With white rose-garden valleys far below.

That realm is wrapt in everlasting peace,
Its glory never sullied by a cloud ;
May mornings of its ages never cease,
Its life is never shadowed by a shroud.

There, like a flock of swans, the seraphs throng
A-flutter on their spotless wings of white ;
No anguish mars the sweetness of their song ;
Their day is never menaced by the night.

Among them there is not an aching breast,
For fond emotions they are far above ;
No thrill of passion can disturb their rest,
And not one heart has felt the pangs of love.

In ages past, I, too, have trod those heights,
And plucked white violets of those virgin vales,
Have soared with seraphs in ecstatic flights,
And wandered with them in those dreamy dales.

Arcturus

But I have fallen from that high estate,
Because I loved as mortal man may love ;
So, banished here, repining at my fate,
I gaze in sorrow at that star above.

And so on earth I wander all alone
When springtime hopes and summer dreams have fled,
While winds of autumn, dead-leaf laden, moan
Where one I loved is lying with the dead.

Yet I have known the transcendental thrill
Of loving, and of feeling love returned,
Have known that love which God's own laws instil,
For which the gentle heart of Jesus yearned.

And though I tread no diamond-dazzling height,
I clasp Love's bosom, thrilled with burning bliss,
And I, though losing lilied fields of white,
Have given and received a lover's kiss.

So while I tread bereft through winter snows,
And lose my throne for all eternity ;
While seraph comrades shun me in my woes,
I wonder if they do not envy me.

ARCTURUS.

ONE night I lay within a prison cell,
Disgraced, condemned, devoured by burning shame,
Bearing with blushes a dishonored name ;
Both Hope and Pride had heard their funeral knell,
And I was crushed with woes no tongue could tell.
Then through the sombre skies Arcturus came ;
He tinged my iron bars with crimson flame,
And on my tears his radiant jewels fell.

The Catbirds

So then I ceased to beat against my bars,
And bowed my head beneath the chastening rod.
How petty seem to thee our woes and wars,
How short the griefs of children of the sod,
Arcturus, emperor of a million stars,
Arcturus, everlasting son of God:

THE CATBIRDS.

I

I BREATHE the subtle springtime air
And hear the blue-gray catbirds there,
The gypsies of the April day,
Whose carols drive my cares away.

The red-buds glow like red-cloud skies,
The bluets mock my sweetheart's eyes,
And plum-tree thickets' tangled bowers
Bestrew my path with snowy showers.

II

"Come, lover, come!" the catbirds sing,
"Sigh not in lonely wandering;
Have courage, and the deed is done,
For any maiden may be won.

"Woo not a lassie with your tears,
Vex not a damsel with your fears;
To him who falters, she is cold;
She loves a lover who is bold.

III

"Beg not a maiden for a kiss,
But take by force your rightful bliss;
Turn not for any false alarms,
But seize her in your tyrant arms.

Sunset in Tennessee

“ Though she be rich and you be poor,
Knock bravely at her Being’s door ;
If she refuse when this be done,
She is not worthy to be won.”

SUNSET IN TENNESSEE.

IN Tennessee, the ancient mountains stand,
Guarding the green fields to the far, far west,
The Mississippi folds her further strand,
And all her hills and plains and valleys rest.

In Tennessee, the sunset lingers long,
Till shades of twilight gather near and far,
And now is heard the home-bound negroes’ song,
The mock-bird’s trill beneath the evening star.

In Tennessee, the friends I used to know
Gather in scenes I loved in bygone days,
By hearthstones where I lingered long ago,
Before I trod these far-off Northern ways.

I wonder if those old-time boyhood friends
Will sometimes wish to see my face once more,
Or if they miss me when the daylight ends,
And long to greet me as in years of yore.

In Tennessee, there is a lass I know,
Who trod beside me under skies of May,
Whose coming steps would set my heart aglow,
Whose smile would make me happy all the day.

I wonder if she ever feels regret
For happy moments that she spent with me,
And longs to see, when suns of Autumn set,
Her old-time lover, there in Tennessee.

A Night in June

A NIGHT IN JUNE.

LUCY, my sweet, as we went last night
Down the garden walks in the moon's white
light ;
As a startled thrush from the peach trees flew,
And you plucked a rose that was decked with dew ;
As the mock-bird sang to the evening star
And the sheep-bells clinked in the folds afar,
The words that you spoke were sweeter in spell
Than moonbeams or dews or bird-song or bell.

Lucy, my own, as the roses blushed,
As the cannas flamed and the dahlias flushed ;
As the lily arose in her snowy gown,
You trembled, my lass, with your eyes cast down.
Peonies in pink and purple and white
Were watching your face in the silvery light ;
They listened and smiled and nodded, my sweet,
As though they had heard your timid heart beat.

Lucy, my queen, as the dewdrops fell,
And the whip-poor-will called in the tangled dell ;
As the honeysuckles twined and the honeysuckles
trailed,
And from golden blooms their odors exhaled ;
Like a king who comes to his rightful throne,
I clasped you and kissed you, my sweet, my own ;
Then the roses turned in amaze untold
To think that a lover could be so bold.

Lucy, my bride, in that ardent kiss
We were born again, to a life of bliss ;
Yet glory and gladness were blended with gloom,
And thistle and thorn with the bridal bloom ;
For we breathed not vows to last for a day,
But Passion that never should pass away ;
Our hearts, lives and souls with our hands we gave
From gardens of youth to gates of the grave.

The Round of the Year

Lucy, my life, when the morning came
With its golden spears and its banners of flame,
In purple and pearl and orange and red,
Its dews were not light as my joyous tread.
For after that morning has passed away,
And after my locks are sprinkled with gray,
When lovers unborn by my grave tread alone,
No night like that night shall ever be known.

THE ROUND OF THE YEAR.

I DREAM of you, sweet,
When the indigo birds, like blossoms of purple, are
floating through skies of Spring,
And the new-wakened thrashers in crimson and orange
clusters of cross-vine sing ;
When the doves in the pink peach orchards woo and coo in
a dream of blissful love,
And the locust is bending with branches of creamy butter-
fly blooms above.

I pine for you, sweet,
When the black and scarlet tanagers come from the South
to feed on the golden bees,
And with sharp, sweet cider is dripping the mill that is
under the apple trees ;
When the barefooted boy of the farmer surprises the field-
lark on her nest,
And the quails are a-skimming close over the wheat-field's
palpitant, hazy breast.

I sigh for you, sweet,
When the Autumn's red leaves are flitting like frolicsome
red birds round and around,
And the bronze-red pears and the golden quinces are
scattered and strewn on the ground ;

By the Summer Sea

When the wild bees treasure in oak-tree hollows for the
Winter their brown honeycombs,
And the goldfinches, false Summer friends, have fled afar
to their tropical homes.

I love you, my sweet,
When the keen white diamond star of eve is on high in the
clear cold skies of blue,
And the haggard forest trees are lonesome and leafless and
lifeless through and through ;
When the snow storm comes like a flock of swans from the
far, far Kingdom of the Grail,
And the Earth, a bride in a field of lilies, decks with a
moon-white gown and veil.

BY THE SUMMER SEA.

FAR in the distance meet the sky and sea,
And melt together in an azure haze,
As dim and dreamy as eternity,
With vast void spaces lost in mellow maze.

The white-winged ships are flitting far away,
The white-winged gulls are circling there on high ;
O snowy wings, I long to leave this clay,
And follow, follow you through sea and sky !

Warm breezes from the far-off tropics blow,
The sunlight shimmers on the brilliant beach,
Until the day, with blushes all aglow,
Is mellow as a pink and yellow peach.

I watch the billows with their emerald glooms,
Forever restless, rushing on and on,
The breakers beating like an eagle's plumes —
Wild beings, hunting peace forever gone !

Southern Love-Song

Here, wading with their pink and pearly feet,
The beautiful barefooted children play ;
Their faces, like their joys, are fresh and sweet —
Blonde childhood in a blonde midsummer day !

Their life is laughter, and their love is bliss,
Free from regret for perished years of yore,
Their world is one great blossom, youth a kiss,
Ere storms shall thunder, “ Fled forevermore ! ”

I watch them, pensive, till the day is done,
And melancholy twilight follows noon,
Till, like a blood-red tulip, sinks the sun,
And like a snow-white lily comes the moon.

SOUTHERN LOVE-SONG.

LUCY, my lass, when the jasmine blows,
And the dogwood decks in his blossomy snows ;
When the daffodil’s flag in the breeze unfurls,
And the cherry is flecked with a frost of pearls;
When the redbird soars and the bluebird sings,
And the buff meadowlark through the broomsedge wings ;
When the tanager flits like a flame above,
I think of you ever, my lassie, my love.

Lucy, my lass, in the summer’s heat,
When the sun-rays flash in the golden wheat ;
When I hear the call of the far-off quail ;
When I see the swirl of the scythe and flail ;
When the cricket chirps in the long lush grass,
And the zinnia glows like a shield of brass ;
When the blue haze hangs on the dreamy hill,
My Lucy, my lassie, I am faithful still.

The Old Love and the New

Lucy, my lass, when the asters shine
And the muscadine hangs on its glossy vine ;
When the golden-rod sets all the fields afire,
And the sad wind sighs like a lover's lyre ;
When the sumach robes in velvet of red
And the purple and gold of the woods are shed ;
When the south-winged cranes fleck the evening sky,
My lassie, my Lucy, I wish you were nigh.

Lucy, my lass, when the snow-flakes come,
And the blooms are dead and the birds are dumb ;
When forests and fields are sullied with blight,
And the chill clouds spread in the winter night ;
When the youth and joy of the year have sped,
And its royal hopes and its dreams have fled,
You come unto me like a darling dove,
And I welcome you gladly, Lucy, my love.

THE OLD LOVE AND THE NEW.

TO-NIGHT I see you, Alice, in your silk rose-colored gown,
A spray of white narcissus in your hair of burnished brown ;
I see your dazzling diamonds with their meteoric dyes,
Your necklace and your bracelet, with their splendid serpent eyes.

I hear the music throbbing in a strong, triumphant strain,
Like victor hymns in battle, shouting over foemen slain,
I see wine-glasses bubbling with the vintages of old,
The brown topaz of sherries and the champagne's shimmering gold.

I hear the sweep of satins through illuminated halls,
I see the oleanders, ferns and palm-trees by the walls ;

The Old Love and the New

I see the dancers dancing to melodious music there,
And see the orchids nodding in the sweetly-scented air.

But I remember, Alice, you were lovelier to my sight,
A little country maiden, in your simple frock of white,
And I remember how I called you "fairest of the fair,"
When first I saw you, Alice, with a wild-rose in your hair.

Do you remember, Alice, how I loved you in those days,
Your bashful, big boy lover, with his awkward rustic ways ?
Do you remember how I spent the day in gusty sighs,
Yet never dared to tell you, nor to look you in the eyes ?

Do you remember how I climbed the tree to please your
whim,
To rob the nest of bluejays anchored on a swinging limb ?
Do you remember how you begged me then to spare the
nest,
Because the startled mother seemed so very much distressed?

Have you forgotten how the brambles pricked me through
and through,
When plucking big blackberries just to offer them to you ?
Then doffing shoes and stockings, bearing you across the
creek,
I thrilled to feel the pressure of the velvet of your cheek ?

Have you forgotten how your rustic lover, growing bold,
Had blurted his confession with a warmth of words untold,
And then protested you had made him happiest in the land,
And, growing ever bolder, dared at last to kiss your hand ?

Ah, Alice, since those summers wealth has come to yours
and you,
While I am still the same unlucky fellow that you knew ;
I can't expect you, Alice, to remember those old days,
For you and I are facing at the parting of the ways.

Edith Adair

But now you come to greet me, as you came in other times,—
The sweet old-fashioned moments, rippling by like runes
and rhymes.

You say you still remember? That you can not change
at all?

Ah, Alice, Love is waiting, and will come if you but call!

I loved you, little Alice, as you romped through fields of
green,

I love you, stately Alice, as you tread a peerless queen;

And so, my Alice, I am happiest lover in the land

To steal behind these orchids, where I boldly kiss your hand.

EDITH ADAIR.

EDITH ADAIR, as I went to-day
Down the long green lane, through the wildwoods
gay,

By the hawthorn hedge, with its buds of white,
And the old oak tree on the breezy height;
As I walked through fields where the blackberries grow
And the pink peach blooms from the orchards blow,
When songs of the thrush were loud in the air,
I remembered you ever, Edith Adair.

Edith Adair, I remember still
The long green lane, and the oak on the hill;
I remember the songs and skies of spring,
And the pink peach blooms, the birds on the wing;
I remember the thrushes in boughs above,
Who listened, like you, to my words of love;
I remember the flush of your face so fair
When you said that you loved me, Edith Adair.

Edith Adair, that was long ago,
Ere youth and ere love lost their gladsome glow;
You said you were true, but you turned at last,
And left me to brood on the perished past.

Beautiful Jean

The hawthorn hedge is as lovely as then,
The thrush sings as sweet in the dewy glen,
The sky is as blue, the flowers as fair,
But you have forsaken me, Edith Adair.

Edith Adair, as you pass me by
With a haughty brow and averted eye,
You scorn the poor lover of long ago
Who plods the rough road with his footsteps slow ;
As you ride away in your silken gown,
As the diamonds flash in your tresses brown,
You taunt me with gold and with jewels rare —
The price of your perfidy, Edith Adair.

Edith Adair, you can not forget
The peach trees' blooms on the day that we met ;
How, when under the springtime skies of blue,
You promised your lover to still be true ;
You can not forget that under the moon,
With the buds and blooms and the mock-bird's tune,
I gathered you close in my strong arms' snare,
And I kissed you, and kissed you, Edith Adair.

Edith Adair, though my soul may pine,
While your hand is his, your heart is yet mine ;
Though you hide your thoughts with a woman's skill,
I know — yes, I know — that you love me still !
Though you laugh and laugh in pretended glee,
I know that your heart turns ever to me ;
You remember all, you sigh with despair,
For you can not forget me, Edith Adair !

BEAUTIFUL JEAN.

BEAUTIFUL JEAN, when the springtime comes,
And the gold-belted bee in the locust hums ;
When in billows of pink the peach-bloom blows,
And apple and plum scatter swirls of snows ;

Geraldine Gray

When the scarlet wreath of the cross-vine swings,
And the blue-bell there in the garden rings,
No blossom may glow through the world of green
As fair as your face, my beautiful Jean.

Beautiful Jean, when the poppies burn,
And the grapes into gold and purple turn ;
When the ferns droop low by the woodland stream,
And the gray dove cooes in a blissful dream ;
When the rippling wheat hides the partridge nest,
And the trumpet-flower flaunts with his flaming crest ;
No charm of the summer gives soul to the scene
As your sweet, sweet smile, my beautiful Jean.

Beautiful Jean, when the asters blaze,
And the gentians glow by the country ways ;
When the maples flush with a royal red,
Where the broken heart of the Autumn bled ;
When the chill dews weep at the close of day
For glory of earth that is passing away,
Your heart is aglow in a tropic sheen,
Forsaking me not, my beautiful Jean.

Beautiful Jean, when the north-wind blows,
And the desolate fields are forsaken to snows ;
When the dead branch waves in the dull gray glooms,
And the leaves are laid in their chilly tombs ;
When the lilies lift in their pride no more,
And the roses all are a dream of yore,
You reign in my heart, my princess, my Queen,
Through storm and through snow, my beautiful Jean.

GERALDINE GRAY.

GERALDINE GRAY, by your ruined home
The negroes build huts and the gypsies roam ;
The cattle browse there by its quiet streams,
And the truant treads with his school-boy dreams ;

Geraldine Gray

In its gnarled old elms the woodpeckers call,
And its rotting plums and apricots fall ;
The lilies decay in its shattered urns,
And overgrown weeds choke the fountain's ferns.

Geraldine Gray, on your lonesome grave
The brambles entwine and the grasses wave ;
The roses that grew by your headstone low
Have withered and died in the long ago,
While the marble wreath and the marble cross
Are cankered and green and mottled with moss.
Birds sing overhead, but they do not care
For the beautiful being who slumbers there.

Geraldine Gray, in the years of yore
You have loved me much, but ambition more ;
You sought to restore the fortune and fame
Of your falling house and your old-time name ;
You sought after wealth, but I had no gold
To bring back the pride, the pleasures of old.
You watched your old home in its slow decay ;
For its sake you were false, O Geraldine Gray.

Geraldine Gray, when you broke your vow,
I whispered to you, "How I hate you now !
I will tread far lands, I will gather gold,
I will harden my heart, be crafty and cold ;
I will sweat and starve, I will stint and save,
All dangers will dare, all buffets will brave.
I will then return, and will laugh to see
How you long, too late, to return to me !"

Geraldine Gray, through sun after sun
I digged and I toiled till the fight was won ;
And so from afar in that stranger land
I brought all the gold a prince could command.

Mary of Jonesburg

Then I came to look in your face once more,
In triumph, revenge, for the wrongs of yore ;
But at length, as I reached your ruined hall,
I staggered aghast, and I knew it all.

Geraldine Gray, at whatever cost,
You had vowed to win, but at last you lost.
You plotted, you schemed, every art you tried ;
Defeated, heart-broken, despairing, you died.
And then, as the mist crept over the lea,
As the moon, like a ghost, rose over the sea,
As the chill dank dews in your churchyard lay,
I knew I still loved you, Geraldine Gray.

MARY OF JONESBURG.

O BEAUTIFUL Mary of Jonesburg town,
With your dusky locks and your eyes of brown,
You come like a breath of the country air
From the cotton- and corn-fields over there,
In the good old hills of west Tennessee ;
So blithesome and bright, so fresh and so free,
As the queen of belles I vote you a crown,
O beautiful Mary of Jonesburg town.

Mary of Jonesburg, I can see there still
The Methodist church on the old green hill ;
Then the wood where the redbird rears his crest,
And the fence where the bluebird builds his nest.
I see the school-house in the field of sedge,
And the old saw-mill on the village's edge
Where the Democrats come from the country down
To carry the box of your Jonesburg town.

Mary of Jonesburg, though your frock be plain,
You never know need of a sweeping train.
Your laughter, as light as a cat-bird's call ;
Your sighing, as soft as a peach-bloom's fall ;

Genevieve Mar

Your cheeks, as ruddy as apples in June,
Have thrilled my old heart-strings back into tune.
No duchess so fair in her silken gown
As beautiful Mary of Jonesburg town.

Mary of Jonesburg, here in New York town
I long for your smile and your eyes of brown.
Though free-silver rules in the Jonesburg fold,
Your heart, I am sure, is a heart of gold.
Though I see Wall Street, or on Broadway tread,
I find your enchantments have turned my head,
And my heart steals back to be there cast down
At the feet of Mary of Jonesburg town.

GENEVIEVE MAR.

GENEVIEVE MAR, by the autumn sea,
Where the billows break and the shadows flee ;
Where the shells are cast on the shifting sands
And the curlews flit from their unknown lands ;
Where the light-house glares on the jutting cape,
And the gray sky sweeps to the gray landscape,
I know you remember your lover afar
With a lead-laden heart, O Genevieve Mar.

Genevieve Mar, as the ravens call,
And the peach is a-mould by the orchard wall ;
As the dead leaves flit on the misty air,
And the oak and elm are lonesome and bare ;
As the raincloud comes, and the daylight dies,
And the dead grass waves, and the north wind sighs,
Your heart is adrift like a shattered spar,
And your soul is a wreck, O Genevieve Mar.

Genevieve Mar, when the autumn comes,
And the billows boom like a throb of drums,
The weeds that have grown in depths of the seas
Turn purple and brown like boughs of the trees.

Homer

So down in your heart the joys of the past
Are withered and sere and sullied at last ;
The autumn has come over breaker and bar,
Breathing death to your dreams, O Genevieve Mar.

Genevieve Mar, you remember one
Who trod by your side in the April sun ;
He gave you his life when he gave you his love,
Then you cast him aside like an outworn glove.
But you longed at last for days that were dead —
Ah, you can not win Love when his summer has fled !
Too late ! for your heart is seared with a scar,
On your soul is a blight, O Genevieve Mar.

HOMER.

WHAT earthly King who envies not my name ?
What century shall behold my honor dim ?
As virile and as vigorous is my fame
As when mankind first heard my morning hymn.

Cæsar has come, has conquered, passed away ;
Young Alexander's empire is a dream ;
Napoleon shared my sceptre for a day,
Then saw the snapping of his cobweb scheme.

But I, who living begged my daily bread,
Found death the gateway to a golden throne;
I rule the living, though they call me dead,
And time to me is but a term unknown.

I see new poets come to take my place ;
They can not lift my lance or bend my bow ;
If in their lines be loveliness or grace,
I said the same three thousand years ago.

A Portrait of Henry Timrod

So Babylon and Nineveh have gone,
While I rejoice in everlasting day ;
Paris, Manhattan, London, had their dawn,
And I shall see their splendor fade away.

The dear old gods I knew in ancient days,
Of Egypt and Assyria, Greece and Rome,
Have lost their crowns, and strange new idols gaze
Across the desert and the ocean foam.

The golden-haired Apollo is no more,
But songs I sang him still have power to thrill ;
Though Pallas pass, I keep my strength of yore ;
Great Pan is dead, but I am living still.

Lo, by the everlasting throne of God
Sits Gabriel with his trumpet in his hand,
Waiting that far, far day, when sea and sod
Give up their dead, before that Judge to stand.

Not till that trumpet bids the sun grow black,
Shall breath of God blow out my radiant flame ;
Not till the earth shall wander from her track,
And there is no more sea, shall die my name.

A PORTRAIT OF HENRY TIMROD.

STANGE eyes gaze sadly from that weary face,
Beneath a brow that shows the seal of care ;
Defeat and Disappointment leave their trace
Upon the youthful visage pictured there.

The same old story here is handed down —
The true-born poet and the same old doom —
The bard who starves while rhymesters wear the crown,
Who finds his throne erected in a tomb.

O d e

Gone are the glories of your halcyon days,
Gone are the heroes whom you sung of yore ;
Their banners in the skies no longer blaze,
Their fervent shouts are stilled forevermore.

No more their white steeds paw the bloody field,
No more their trumpets rouse the raptured soul,
No more their ranks in fiery fight are wheeled,
No more their drums like sullen thunders roll.

Yet as I view your old-time picture, all
The proud past blossoms, though your day has fled ;
Once more I hear your Stuart's battle-call,
And see your Stonewall rising from the dead.

I see their blazoned banners float like fire,
I hear their shouts sweep down the perished years ;
I hear once more the throbbing of your lyre,
Ecstatic with a nation's hopes and fears.

And foes with friends now come to honor you,
O poet, free from blemish and from blame.
A wreath is yours as long as men are true,
As long as Courage wins the crown of Fame.

ODE.

FOR CHARTER DAY — NEW YORK, MAY 4, 1898.

O GIANT Empress of the Western World,
Crown princess of the hopes of human-kind,
What brilliant banners have thy sons unfurled,
What gladsome garlands have thy daughters twined !
Resplendent at thy gateway of the sea,
Thou holdest in thy hand the torch of Truth,
The greatest of the cities yet to be,
In Oriental glory of thy youth.

Ode

The ancient East brings tribute unto thee,
The pearls of Ceylon, spice of Hindu groves,
The silks of China, gums of Araby,
The dates of Syria and Sumatra cloves.
France greets thee with the violet of her vines,
And England with the fleeces of her looms ;
Here palms of Cuba blend with Norway pines,
And Greenland furs with Ethiopian plumes.

Yet all these glorious gifts shall pass away,
Like Tyrian silver, Carthaginian gold,
And in some dim and undiscovered day
Like fairy stories shall thy deeds be told.
In that far future none shall tribute bring,
And none shall stand amazed before thy powers,
No poet shall thy strength and splendor sing,
No monarch tremble at thy haughty towers.

So, stately city, ere thy youth be past,
Let Goodness be thy daughter, Truth thy son ;
Let Beauty be thy priestess to the last,
Thy house their temple till the day is done.
Then in thy strength do deeds that can not die,
Win honors that shall never pass their noon ;
Let Art unite with Love to rear on high
A palace like a lily 'neath the moon.

Lo ! in thy million homes this very night,
God sees thy children shed a flood of tears ;
He sees the hungry stranger's piteous plight,
And sees thee pass them by with deafened ears.
Though thou art rich, thine orphans cry for bread,
Thy widows in their anguish weep aloud,
Thy wayward sons without thy palace tread,
Thine erring daughters find thee cold and proud.

Take these upon thy bosom, bind their wounds,
And let thy boast be through the coming years,
" No man was ever hungry in my bounds,
No woman wept, but that I dried her tears."

Union Square

So then, O princess, bring thy cruse of oil,
Like Mary, in her day of dark despair,
And wash His feet from dust of travel-toil,
And dry them with the tresses of thy hair.

Then let years die and generations pass,
Thy temples totter, palaces decay ;
Though these may perish like the summer grass,
Thy greater glory shall not fade away.
For thou shalt raise an altar on this sod,
Triumphant over funeral torch and bell,
O peerless daughter of the living God !
O heroine who withstood the hosts of hell !

UNION SQUARE.

I WATCH the water lilies in this pond,
The white, the blue, the yellow and the red,
The sparrow tripping on their pads beyond,
And splashing dewdrops on his wings and head.

The lotus, like a Cleopatra there,
Reveals a bosom with a roseate glow,
As in her gorgeous old Egyptian lair
She fascinated heroes long ago.

Adown the walk a throng of children goes
With dewy eyes a-peep through hazy curls,
When years are poems, every month a rose,
All morns are rubies and all noons are pearls.

Around these seats I see a motley crowd
Of listless loungers, miserable and low,
With backs bent double, wrinkled faces bowed,
Or, aimless, straggling by with footsteps slow.

Union Square

With corncob pipes these old men mumbling sit,
Forsaken, friendless, waiting but for death,
When, like the dead leaves that around them flit,
They fall to be forgotten in a breath.

And here a hard-faced girl reclines alone,
Dreaming of dead days with their holy calm,
Before her happy heart was turned to stone,
And slumber to her spirit brought no balm.

Here the young poet, once a farmer-boy,
Who with glad heart unto the city came,
Sees manhood years his high-born hopes destroy,
And slay his dreams of fortune and of fame.

When night descends, electric argent lamps,
Like radiant cactus blossoms, blaze on high ;
The city seems a world of warlike camps,
While Broadway with his legions thunders by.

In gilt play-houses hundreds sigh to see
The mimic woes of actors on the stage,
But not one tear for actual grief shall be,
The snares of childhood or the pangs of age.

Around this Square rich men and women ride,
Bedizened creatures in their fashion flaunt,
While this starved outcast, planning suicide,
Steals back to perish in his dismal haunt.

Strange, while is known so well the sparrow's fall,
Man heeds not when his brother's plaint is made ;
Strange, that the brightest, whitest light of all
Should cast the deepest and the darkest shade !

But still the world denies its helping hand
To those most worthy of its love and care.
If Christ returned to-night, he too would stand
Homeless and friendless, here on Union Square.

A Street in the Slums

A STREET IN THE SLUMS.

I SLOWLY wander through the crowded street
And see the people swarming on my way,
Hear clatter of their hundred thousand feet,
And watch their faces, stolid, grave or gay.

And there are children, children everywhere ;
Some sprawl before you, some go running by,
Some shouting here while some are singing there,
The elders laughing as the youngsters cry.

Their hands and faces all are soiled and smeared,
Brown, naked, muddy all their legs and feet ;—
Young savages in city cellars reared,
The gypsies and the Tartars of the street.

A crowd of buxom, ruddy-visaged girls
In saucy gladness down the sidewalk comes ;—
Doves of the alleys, hovel-hidden pearls,
The roses and the lilies of the slums.

A proud young mother, nursing twins, sits there,
One at her breast, one fallen fast asleep ;
A tall policeman treads with lordly air,
As though the kingdoms all were in his keep.

Down there, a beggar's old hand-organ squeaks,
Fruit venders, unshaved peddlers standing nigh ;
The freckled newsboy runs and calls and shrieks,
Street-cleaners, porters, bootblacks plodding by.

Here, wearing ear-ring hoops of solid gold,
A rich Italian matron goes in black,
And here, a toothless, bearded beldame old
Bends with the burden on her crooked back.

A Retrospect

I watch the old Jew in his clothing shop,
The curious sign in Hebrew at the door ;
I see him call his country friends to stop
And view the untold wonders of his store.

And last I note the old primeval curse
That comes to all, in squalor and in state ;
That small white coffin yonder in the hearse
Leaves one more shabby home disconsolate.

A RETROSPECT.

AT THE ELEVATED RAILROAD STATION.

ALONE amid this noisy mob to-night,
Elbowed and jostled, crowded, pushed aside,
Somehow I think of you, far from my sight,
You whom I knew so well in days that died.

Do you reproach me, since my heart seems cold,
And silent lips in pain and pride are curled,
That now I seem to lose the warmth of old,
And tread a stranger to my boyhood world ?

Do I regret you ? O, you know full well
How I would gladly come to seek you, sweet,
The old love-stories in your ears to tell,
And hold your hand while nestling at your feet.

Ah, once again to feel the old-time thrills,
The sweet, sharp poignancy of perished bliss,
With veins a-gush like purple winepress rills,
The whole world concentrating in a kiss !

I see blue skies, the hills in dreamy haze,
The trills of thrushes pierce ecstatic air ;
I sigh with sweetness of your gentle gaze,
And, trembling, twine white lilies in your hair.

The Swan of the Slums

But Fate has parted us ; our dreams must die ;
Where Duty calls me, there my feet must go.
This rumbling railroad station, perched on high,
Brings back to mind the Real World below.

Like blood-red poppies sown through twinkling wheat,
The city lamps are flickering from afar ;
A fiery serpent, sweeps a curving street,
And like a jewelled beetle creeps a car.

And mute above, I see the secret stars,
The Greater Bear beyond the Northern Crown,
Below me, raging at his iron bars,
The Flaming Dragon of the sleepless Town.

THE SWAN OF THE SLUMS.

ALONE in the depths of the grimy town
I hasten along as the sun goes down ;
Strange jargons I hear, strange faces I meet
In the motley crowds of the swarming street.
By the loathsome dives, by the dismal dens,
Where the castaways throng in their festering fens,
Where the reeking slums like a cancer spread,
I am sick of heart and dizzy of head.

Hovels on hovels in the byways scowl,
Blister on blister through the alleys foul !
Here the pedler yells and the fakir shrieks,
And the footpad lurks, the shoplifter sneaks.
Here the burglar scowls and the ruffian skulks
In the cellars and stairs of the rotting hulks ;
Here the knife-grinder goes with his bells a-ring,
And the wounded thief with his arm in a sling.

The Swan of the Slums

Here the venders stand with their butter and eggs,
And their pungent cheese and their mackerel kegs ;
Here are cheap junk stores, here are baker shops,
Where the beggar, half-starved, turns a-gazing, and stops.
Here alone at last, in the reeking slums,
As the daylight dies and the darkness comes,
A girl I behold, who is wondrous fair,
With her white-rose face and her bright brown hair.

O maiden so pure, so lovely, so white,
As you stand alone in the coming night,
How came you, my child, in your peerless grace,
To the shame and sin of this putrid place ?
Around you, the dark is a dismal pall,
But in heart and soul it is darkest of all ;
O damsel so fair, by what demon spell
Have you sunk so low, in these dens to dwell ?

In another life, and in perished hours,
A lady, you reigned in your castle towers ;
Love brought you his bliss and pierced you with pain
As a princess there in the courts of Spain.
You have made kings bleed, made the kingdoms quake,
While the heroes fought and fell for your sake ;
In another life, like a strange romance,
You have lived and died as the queen of France.

But you rose again from your dusty tomb,
And this, lovely child, is your dreadful doom ;
And you come like a dream on your delicate feet
To tread through the mud of this loathsome street.
So, marvelous maid, you are here from afar,
A lily, a dove, a swan, and a star ;
And the maiden moon in the sky looks down
On the maiden moon in the grimy town.

Alone in New York

ALONE IN NEW YORK.

FAR from familiar old-time haunts I tread,
Far from remembered scenes of Tennessee ;
A wilderness of walls I see instead,
A surging ocean of humanity.

For leafy woods, are piles of brick and stone ;
For grassy fields, a million roofs arise ;
For crooning winds, I hear the cable's groan ;
For lowing herds, I hear the huckster's cries.

No mocking-bird is singing to the breeze —
I hear the roll of wagon wheels instead.
An iron eagle in his iron trees,
The engine thunders swooping overhead.

Within the city park the sparrow cheeps,
Consoling for the warble of a thrush ;
Mechanic fountains make mechanic leaps
To imitate the mountain torrent's rush.

The stiff ungraceful walks, prim flower-beds,
Show gaudy clumps of yellow, red, or green ;
The trim-clipped hedges lift their tawdry heads
To vie with tangled wildwoods I have seen.

But here I came for sake of you, my Art,
As I had promised in the long ago,
To follow you with ever-loyal heart,
Though fame and fortune I might never know.

And though I tread alone, I feel your hand
Slip into mine as in the dear old days ;
And though a stranger in a strangers' land,
I hear your footsteps all my crowded ways.

On Returning to New York

And though my heart aches as I go alone,
And though mine eyes grow dim with unshed tears,
Although my bosom now is steel and stone,
Unlike its old self of departed years ;

And though at night I toss and toss awake,
Within a garret, on a lowly bed ;
Although my struggling spirit seems to break,
When halcyon hopes and darling dreams have fled —

I hear you whisper : “ Wait, O wait for dawn,
When all heart-breaking anguish shall be through ;
And should you win or lose, go on, go on,
And still, brave heart, be true, be true ! ”

ON RETURNING TO NEW YORK.

O NCE more I see your towers touch the sky,
And hear the sullen thunder of your street ;
Once more I see your legions hurry by,
And rush to join them with my restless feet.

I come not as I came in other days
With ardent and enthusiastic soul,
When fame and fortune hovered in my gaze,
And, near at hand, I thought I saw the goal.

Ah, surely things have sadly changed since then,
When thou wert radiant with deceitful wiles ;
A sorrow overclouds thy throngs of men,
And sullen scowls erase thine olden smiles.

Plain and prosaic seem thy realms of joy,
O golden apple of my bygone themes,
O golden fleece that lured a foolish boy,
O priceless pearl, O diamond of my dreams !

Cuba

Like Atalanta, fleetest of the fleet,
Thy lovers come to woo from far and nigh ;
They run the race with thee, and in defeat
They bend the head beneath thy hand to die.

I shudder as I see thy crowded gate,
And outside, doubting and perplexed, I stand ;
But now, I proudly come to face my fate,
With none to welcome, none to take my hand.

Yet, royal city, I have courage still,
A spirit that shall never bend the knee ;
My soul is guarded with unconquered Will,
A sword I never shall surrender thee.

I give thee battle, and shall bravely smite,
For he who wins must woo thee with the sword ;
My feet shall never safety seek in flight,
A coffin or a crown be my reward.

And there can be no abdication, save
When I throw down the sceptre that is mine ;
If I should fall from glory to the grave,
My own hand must my own death-warrant sign.

He who relies upon his own right arm,
Nor fears his gauntlet at the foe to fling,
May drink of poisons, and they shall not harm,
And take up serpents, and they shall not sting.

CUBA.

WE praise the heroes of a long-dead time,
The Spartan or the Roman or the Gaul ;
We flatter in oration or in rhyme
The dusty corses deaf and dumb to all.

Cuba

We prate of petty wrongs our fathers felt,
But martyrs tortured now we pity not ;
No modern crime can make us mouth or melt,
Though women wail and men are starved and shot.

Like gaping listeners at some passing show
Who melt with pity at an actor's tears,
Applauding, bent with passion to and fro,
At glimpses of fictitious hopes and fears—
So we have sighed and sobbed for other times,
Mourned over urns, hissed tyrants turned to clay,
Yet idly watched the century's crown of crimes,
And seen true heroes die like dogs to-day.

Strange, that a people, once themselves oppressed,
Heeds not the patriots fighting to be free ;
Strange, those who braved the Briton's lion crest,
Should let a murderous pirate braggart be !
O shame too great for puny human words,
When gold and silver rule the tongue and pen !
The eagle in the air is king of birds,
The eagle on the dollar king of men !

O Cuba, as in stories of the past,
Transcendent beauty brought transcendent woe,
Thou in thy peerless loveliness at last
Hast seen thy queenly glories sinking low.
When Elsa, slandered, breathed her fervent prayer,
There came her true knight of the Holy Grail ;
But no true knight will heed thy deep despair,
And hasten with a swan-wing for a sail.

Ah, yes, at last it comes—the swan, the swan !
O fairest lady, see thy true knight here !
With white wings fluttering in the roseate dawn,
His bark shall blanch thy tyrant's cheek with fear.
Before the fast feet of the Northern gale
He comes to face thy false accuser, Spain ;
O fairest lady, dream no more of fail ;
Those heroes, Cuba, have not died in vain !

Cuba Free

CUBA FREE.

LIKE Cinderella in her tattered gown,
She sits barefooted in the ashes there,
Robbed of her sceptre and her throne and crown,
A beggar-child, once fairest of the fair.

Take courage, little orphan ! There shall be
A morn of triumph for thy night of woes ;
There is a necklace and a ring for thee,
A silken garment and a wreath of rose.

Like Juliet in her old ancestral halls,
Beset by foemen and their treacherous spies,
She gazes at the grim, forbidding walls,
And spends the weary day in sobs and sighs.

Fear not ! For Freedom is thy Romeo,
And he shall snatch thee from thy hateful cell,
Though three-score thousand vassals bid him go,
And three-score thousand churls stand sentinel.

O captive maiden, though thy castle tower
Be girt with fifty battlements of stone,
Though flaming dragons should surround thy bower,
Thy lover soon shall win thee for his own.

So thou shalt come forth blushing by his side,
From dungeon, iron gate, and granite wall,
His fairy princess and his beauteous bride —
For he shall woo and wed thee, spite of all.

AMERICA AND ENGLAND.

BENEATH the Arctic peaks of silent snow,
Through tropic isles enwreathed with orange blooms ;
Where brown Gibraltar like a giant looms,
Where furnaces of red Sahara glow ;

America at Manila

In spicy groves, where softest breezes blow,
In tangled Hindu jungles' deepest glooms ;
By gray-beard Pharaohs' immemorial tombs,
The Saxon legions conquer every foe.

So Alfred's spear and Nelson's sword shall be
Guards for the flag that Washington unfurled ;
With might of Cromwell, Lincoln, Blake and Lee
Our gauntlet at invaders shall be hurled ;
Lords of the land and emperors of the sea,
The eagle and the lion face the world.

1898.

AMERICA AT MANILA.

THROUGH mazy moonbeams of the secret night
The ships of Dewey reach Manila bay.
The tropic sun leaps forth in sudden light,
And lo, the dawn-flushed city far away !
Then fleets and forts like waking giants scowl,
The swift projectiles whizz and burst a-whirl,
The batteries like ferocious lions growl,
A hundred guns their hoarse defiance hurl.

Then thunder answers thunder, shock on shock,
Shell answers shell, blood-curdling shriek on shriek,
Gun answers gun, from shuddering ships a-rock,
And flaming decks with crimson rivers reek.
A storm of steel tears down Spain's haughty crest,
Her glory sinks a-blaze in blood and tears ;
The olden East has met the youthful West,
Re-writing history of six thousand years.

Men say the age is sordid, yet we find
No Spartans ever breathed from breasts more bold,
No doughtier Norsemen fought with wave and wind,
No true knights lived with hearts of purer gold.

Forgotten Heroes

Lo ! ancient Asia stands in mute amaze ;
Few deeds like this Japan hath ever told ;
Memorial China turns with startled gaze ;
Arabia sees come true her dreams of old.

Far from the sunrise of their native west,
They wake the world at thunder of their guns —
What glory added to your country's crest,
O proudest of the proudest of her sons !
With regal riches in her kingdom wide,
With untold treasures ever at her call,
Columbia, like Cornelia, points with pride
To you, her jewels, prized above them all.

These valorous vikings leave transcendent names
To live through ages that are yet to come,
Though records perish in the floods and flames,
Though marbles crumble, and though lips grow dumb.
As long as day shall dawn on shores and seas
Where they have won Fame's chaplet, Honor's crown,
So long shall sun of glory shine on these,
True heroes, everlasting in renown.

FORGOTTEN HEROES.

I WOULD sing a song to the unknown heroes, who have
striven and battled and bled,
To the unknown heroes, existing obscure, who are left
forgotten when dead,
Who have gone to their graves for you and for me, and are
sleeping in silent ranks
With never a wreath of laurel, or medal, or badge for a
nation's thanks.

I would sing a song to the heroes neglected so long by you
and by me,
In the pestilent tropic marshes, on the blistering ships in the
tropic sea,

Forgotten Heroes

To the yeomen, the stokers, the gunners, with perilous duties
and beggarly pay,

As we shout for the admirals, generals, captains, who bear
all the honors away.

There in the stifling holds of the ships, half-naked and fainting
in fearful heat,

And there in the matted vines, or swordgrass stubble that
pierces their half-shod feet,

And there in the rattle of rifles, where the cynical bullets go
snarling by,

For me and for you they swelter, for me and for you they
reel and they die.

No Congress shall ever reward them, no nation ever be filled
with their fame,

Though they sweat and they swoon and they perish in the
pitiless flood or flame;

They are only the unknown heroes, and the mob-world
neither heeds nor cares,

Though they do and dare for their country more feats than
a million millionaires.

They pant by the ship's fierce furnace, that you and I may
rest at ease in the shade,

They rake and they rout the foeman, that you and I may
laugh at his broken blade,

They laurel the brows of others, though their own triumph
they never shall see,

They fight and they bleed and they fall forsaken, for the
sake of you and me.

I would sing a song to the heroes who have met their doom
on the other side,

Whose plainings are drowned in our pæans, whose pangs
forgot in our flush of pride;

So then, O dying foemen, to your sinking ships and your
flaming flags still true,

I have brought you a branch of laurel, and a heartfelt song
that is all for you.

To a Poet

TO A POET.

HE greatly errs who hopes to win the bays
Without a battle and without a scar,
To walk among the lilies all his ways,
Or lie in sloth, yet reach and seize a star.

O youth, who knockest at the gate of Fame,
Long must thy waiting and thy watching be ;
Beside that gate, with two-edged sword of flame,
A Shape stands guarding that shall challenge thee.

Long years shall pass, and find thee waiting still,
With eyes grown dim, and bonny locks turned gray ;
Long years shall pass, and high upon a hill
The palace that thou seekest far away !

Long years shall pass, and then the shades of night
Shall rust the golden twilight into brown ;
Long years shall pass, and in the fading light
Far, far away shall shine the promised crown.

Who weds the Muse must others all forsake,
Who takes her hand must never look behind ;
He must not falter, though his heart may break,
To all allurements deaf and dumb and blind.

To far, far places must thy feet be turned,
Where strangers only meet thee with a scowl,
When thy brave heart, which once with ardor burned,
Shall seem to throb beneath a sable cowl.

The love thou longest for may be denied,
Thy soul without a comrade evermore,
No one to cheer thee, treading at thy side,
No fair-haired children playing at thy door.

To a Stranger

Old friends will say, when other friends have fled,
“ Forsake the hopeless task thy soul hath sworn !
Poor and neglected, thou dost want for bread,
Thy coat is threadbare and thy cloak is worn.”

Like England's Alfred, fleeing in disguise,
And hotly hunted, planning desperate schemes,
A hag may harry with her shrewish cries
For letting cakes burn as you dream your dreams.

But yet, like Douglas with the heart of Bruce,
Keep safe thy treasure, scorning still to fly ;
That tempter spurn who would thy soul seduce,
And fight to win, or with thy Charge to die.

TO A STRANGER.

A LONG a giant city's streets I go :
Three million strangers right and left I see ;
Three million faces I shall never know ;
Three million hearts, and not one heart for me !

O stranger passing by with careless glance,
I long to greet you, long to know you well,
But still I falter, fearing to advance,
My words of friendship in your ears to tell.

Your soul seems careless and your heart seems cold,
Your eyes averted, lips a-curl with pride ;
Yet half your secrets in your face are told,
Your tragic story can not be denied.

Like you, such pride has made me lift my head
When dull Despair was sitting in my heart,
Has made me smile when old-time friends have fled,
And breathe defiance when my hopes depart.

To a Friend

Like you, O stranger, I have loved and lost,
Like you, have seen my brave ambitions end,
Like you, on seas of sorrow have been tost,
Like you, I seek a sympathetic friend.

Come, let me tell you secrets like your own,
Till all your dull indifference shall depart,—
Truths that should melt a bosom wrought of stone,
And bring the red sparks from a flinty heart.

For we were born to share this fleeting life,
To tread the morning of one little day,
To feel the noontide sorrow, joy, and strife,
And in the selfsame twilight pass away.

Like mine, your heart is diamond clogged with clay,
Your being dust and air and dew and fire,
And as you see earth's blossoms all decay,
You gaze to heaven with untold desire.

For we are spirits manacled in sod,
Two wandering heirs of all eternity,
Two exiled princes who are sons of God,
Two blendings of the dust and deity.

TO A FRIEND.

TORMENTED sorely by the chastening rod,
I muttered to myself : “ There is no God ! ”
But, faithful friend, I found your soul so true,
That God revealed himself in giving you.

Success and Failure

SUCCESS AND FAILURE.

ONE is a maiden crowned with locks of gold,
With cheeks like morning in the summer skies ;
Around her, silken garments float and fold,
And gems are gleaming with their peacock eyes.

The other is her sister, thoughtful-browed,
With ashen tresses and with eyes of gray,
With shades of sadness lingering like a cloud
Upon a visage like an autumn day.

One, like an empress, holds the world in thrall,
And millions prostrate lie before her car ;
Her subjects dwell in every hut and hall,
And swarms of flatterers seek her from afar.

The other is forsaken by the world,
Forgotten by the fickle sons of men ;
Beside her, tattered conquered flags are furled
That never in the skies shall float again.

One is attended by the rich and proud,
Praised by the voice of princes, queens and kings ;
To welcome her, the drum is beat aloud,
The bell goes pealing, and the cymbal rings.

One is attended by the friendless poor,
The sunburnt peasant and the burdened slave ;
No callers ever knock upon her door,
Her hearth is lonesome as an unknown grave.

One counts the smooth time-server in her train,
The crafty courtier and the fawning friend,
Him, who like Faust, would sell his soul for gain,
And him who filches means to win the end.

The Hymns of Charles Wesley

The other notes the unknown soldier's name,
And gives the homeless poet sympathy ;
She cheers the martyr on his couch of flame,
And teaches countless heroes how to die.

The names they bear on earth need not be told ;
But God will crown the one we love the less ;
He calls her "Failure," who hath locks of gold,
And names her gray-haired sister there, "Success."

THE HYMNS OF CHARLES WESLEY.

WHAT simple strains are these, to live so long,
To move so many in so many lands,
When self-appointed arbiters of song
Are all effaced like scribblings in the sands.

In dens of London, choked with sin and shame,
The beggar and the burglar stop to hear ;
And in the night, beneath the street-lamp's flame,
The ruined woman feels a burning tear.

In mines of Cornwall, underneath the sea,
The grimy laborer hears their martial tread,
Their fervent call from coming wrath to flee,
Above the ocean thunders overhead.

Amid Missouri forests, dark and lone,
And by the Mississippi's turbid waves,
In nameless churchyards, bramble-overgrown,
Their converts fill a thousand thousand graves.

Among the rude huts of the pioneers,
Those hymns awoke the wilderness at dark,
Above the cries of wild beasts, fraught with fears,
The panther's growling and the gray wolf's bark.

The Odes of Horace

So I remember, when a barefoot boy,
I thrilled to hear thy wondrous trumpet-call
To Zion, and its days of deathless joy,
Its crystal river and its jasper wall.

And, led by thee, I saw its clustered palms,
Its shining summits with their diamond skies,
A Beulah-land, with everlasting calms,
And lilies wet with dews of Paradise.

And thou didst sing the Saviour's loving care,
Seeking his lost sheep through the fading light,
To snatch and save him from the lion's lair,
Amid the deserts, in the coming night.

These hymns have raised the peasant from the sod,
Have made the rude half-savage nature sweet,
Have reared a score of Kingdoms unto God,
And laid a million hearts at Jesus' feet.

THE ODES OF HORACE.

LONG years have passed since first I read your lays,
A weary schoolboy at a tiresome task,
And learned of Lydia with her winsome ways,
And flavors of your old Falernian cask.
I often longed to take your own advice,
To seize the day, and in no morrow trust,
To revel in a youth that comes not twice,
To snatch sweet kisses ere my lips are dust.

You said "O youth, slay Sadness at her birth,
Espousing Gladness in her morning glow,
When your young sweetheart's mouth is curved with mirth,
And Love's pink blossoms in her cheeks still blow.

The Odes of Horace

When warm blood bounds within thine ardent breast,
Take then the laughing maiden in thine arms,
For she is willing, boy, to be caressed,
And waits for thee in all her Springtime charms.

“ O Maiden, do not drive thy swain away
With frowns, reproaches, childhood's foolish fears ;
For lovers such as he grow scarce some day,
Such kisses will be rare in coming years.
Give to his lips carnations of thy cheek,
Let trembling fingers, interlacing, wed,
Ere thou shalt vainly for a lover seek,
And sigh for sometime beauties thou hast shed.

“ O sordid miser, bending o'er thy books,
In dusty chambers back from dusty streets,
Seek thou the wild woods and the mossy brooks,
The daisies dancing in their green retreats ;
Seek thou the pastures of the browsing sheep,
The hives with overflowing honeycomb,
The cows, in dandelion meads knee-deep,
The peace, the quiet of a rustic home.

“ O sage, that longest for a laurel wreath,
O Soldier, mad for fortune and for fame,
Your honors soon shall be a gift to death,
Oblivion soon shall cover every name.
Shed no more blood save that of luscious grapes,
And learn no lore save in thy loved one's eyes,
Ere Pleasure like a wild-winged bird escapes,
Ere Love in all his roguish beauty dies.

“ For soon this boy shall feel his blood grow cold,
This lassie seek another lad in vain,
This soldier perish, though his heart be bold,
This sage behold his genius on the wane.

Burial of an Old Slave

Before the fruit decays, pluck thou the peach,
Before the young fawn passes, be her mate,
Take thou the rose that still is in thy reach,
And claim thy damsel ere it be too late !

" There are no smiles, no kisses after death,
No bubbling goblets quaffed beyond the tomb,
Thy face shall feel no more thy sweet girl's breath,
Thine arms no more embrace her in that gloom.
Beyond the Stygian river, no one loves,
And no one carols old-time lovers' tunes
In bloomy forests, with the coo of doves,
Or trysting-places under mellow moons."

So thou hast spoken, Horace, and I sigh
To think how many joys I failed to take,
How many fawns unheeded passed me by,
What fruits unplucked, though ripening for my sake.
I long for roses withered on the stalk,
That opened under summer skies for me,
Sweet eyes that watched me in my lonely walk,
Fair hands that beckoned when I would not see.

Yet, Horace, in that land which men must tread,
I can not help but hope that all is well,
That joys we lost have not forever fled,
That dear Love dies not with our funeral bell.
Mayhap while listening to these very lines,
Our vain regrets are subject of thy mirth,
And with thy Lydia, under fruitful vines,
Thou pluckest pleasures that were lost on earth !

BURIAL OF AN OLD SLAVE.

AROUND me, brambles tangle on the graves,
And ivy sprays are creeping on the stones ;
Beside one shattered urn a foxglove waves,
While awe-struck thrushes chirp in undertones.

Burial of an Old Slave

Outside, a field of broomsedge, waste and bare,
And thickets of the red and yellow plum,
And nearer, on the purple thistles there,
Goldfinches in a brilliant cluster come.

Here tombstones hanging sideways to the earth
By winds and rains are dappled into gray ;
Brown lichens have erased the dates of birth
And years in which the sleepers passed away.

Grim sentinel, still facing to the west,
The old slave-master's granite headstone looms ;
His young wife and her baby lie at rest
Where yon wild rose sheds pink and pearly blooms.

Almost effaced, you read a young girl's name ;
Just sixteen when she died ! Here passed away
The first born son, who like a triumph came ;
In whose dead hands Hope crumbled into clay.

Down there are buried all the family slaves,
Relics of ways and customs obsolete ;
A few headboards of wood slant on their graves,
As, year by year, weeds grow and weathers beat.

Up yonder lane a strange procession comes,
And sounds of weird, sweet singing strike the ears ;
Then a shrill fife, and then the beat of drums,
A chant that seems the ghost of bygone years.

Ah, many lives have passed since neighbors came,
Bringing a sleeper to this home to bide ;
But this gray negro, last of all the name,
Has sought again his old-time master's side.

Nearer they come, a wagon for a bier ;
The rails are lowered at the roadside fence ;
The team pulls through—two mules in well-worn gear—
Welcome, old friend, to your last residence !

What songs are these, so mellow, wild and sweet,
Of Salem and its glories far away,

Orchids

Where Change and Death glide not on stealthy feet,
Nor leaves in dim October skies decay ?

What childlike faith, that sings of princely palms,
Of fountains gushing through the fields of green !
What childlike faith, that sings of blissful calms,
And splendors that no sage has ever seen !

Strange, a poor negro in this far-off place,
Trusting a Friend, sinks in his coffin low,
Believes that Friend, forgetting not his face,
Will find him where these weeds and brambles grow.

Rose-breasted grosbeak, lighting on yon limb
And singing as no bird hath sung before,
Is it a note of triumph trilled for him,
The dead slave, free and happy evermore ?

ORCHIDS.

LIKE blossoms changed to butterflies
With wings of purple, yellow, brown,
Or pheasant plumes with ebon eyes
And soft and clouded silken down.

Serpents in garnet, gold, and green,
With graceful neck and glossy crest,
Or humming-birds of brilliant sheen,
With glowing throat and dotted breast ;

Swart, rich-robed princesses, that hide
In tangled Afric jungle shades ;
Fawn-footed Indian maids that bide
By wild Brazilian forest glades.

With flowers such as these, of old
The witch enwreathed her golden head ;
They grew in Circe's haunted wold,
Or oped in dreamlands of the dead.

A Defiance

A DEFIANCE.

YOU leave me alone, and you wend your way
With a face as bright as a springtime day,
And you seem to think, as our pathways part,
That my name is erased from your careless heart.
You say to yourself : " I shall soon forget
We have ever loved, or have even met,
Though his fervent words may have thrilled me so
In the beautiful years of the long ago."

But you can not forget how you blushed one day,
When I held your hand as we went our way,
And you can not forget how I kissed your lips
And you tingled with joy to your finger-tips.
You can not forget how the bluebirds sang
Till the meadows and fields and wildwoods rang,
And we laughed with delight in a dream divine,
When you knew I was yours and that you were mine.

And you can not forget how you loved me then,
Ere I went sad ways through the world of men ;
How happy we were in the dear dead years
Ere the dawn-light died in a flood of tears.
O no ! You will sigh for the sweet slain past,
Its heroic hopes, too brilliant to last,
When life with her frowns has sullied her smiles
And sundered us twain by a thousand miles.

Wherever you go, through the whole wide earth,
Through gloamings of grief, through mornings of mirth,
Wherever you go, wherever you bide,
You shall miss one face, once close by your side.
Whenever you tread under skies of spring,
Whenever you hear the autumn winds sing,
You will sigh for the lover of years of yore,
Who left with your youth, to return no more.

Fireside Fancies

Unless you can say that your soul is dead,
The past forgotten, and memory fled —
Unless you can say, in sincerest truth,
You are glad to have lost the glory of youth ;
Unless you can feel in your innermost heart
You rejoice when you see life's summer depart —
O then, not till then, may your lips declare
You love me no more, and you do not care.

FIRESIDE FANCIES.

HERE, hand in hand, we sit to-night.
Flushed in the logwood's ruddy light,
While red coals glow and blue flames leap
And hot sap sings and crickets cheep.
Outside we hear the wild winds call
And down the pane see snowflakes fall,
While Winter, like a hungry hound,
Hunts over hills with bay and bound.

A palace in the brilliant fires
Rears garnet walls and golden spires,
And many a labyrinthine maze
Bedecked with opal hearts ablaze.
The smoke, an azure banner, curls
O'er halls of rubies and of pearls ;
Blue sapphire turrets flame and flare,
And jasper columns glow and glare.

Here, hand in hand, my love and I
List to the wild winds whistling by ;
We hear the sap sing, crickets cheep,
And see the lithe blue blazes leap.
And then, as chill winds whistle on,
We talk of youthful days long gone ;
Of love that laughed through summer days,
Then left us treading thorny ways.

Morning and Evening

To-night, our hearts, like brands aglow,
Are burning in a world of snow ;
For in your love is summer peace
And summer joys that never cease.
I kiss you, take your hand in mine,
And feel my sordid soul divine.
Let worldly wealth and glory be,
But leave you, precious, still with me !

So here we sit, still hand in hand,
And tread a wondrous fairy-land —
The kingdom of a lover's dreams,
With bloomy woods and murmuring streams.
Still let the wild winds shriek and shout,
Still set the flying snows to rout ;
I care not where my feet may be
When God has put you, love, with me.

MORNING AND EVENING.

IN vanished years it seemed an easy task
To win the hearts of others on our way ;
To gain affection only meant to ask,
To love meant only to be young and gay.

But like a rich convolvulus in bloom
Amid the Summer, under morning skies,
Young Love before the noontide meets his doom,
And in his splendor and his glory dies.

Or like an oriole from tropic lands
That blazes by us on a brilliant wing,
He flies afar to unknown foreign strands
When Autumn gales their withered foliage fling.

Like blackened torches in abandoned vaults
Are all the arts and wiles we used of yore ;

The Klondike

For those who love us learn to find our faults,
And having found them, never love us more.

So then, mine own, I cling more close to you,
Though grey threads sprinkle through your locks of
brown,
Your eyes no longer dewy, bright and blue,
Your cheeks no longer like a peach's down.

And you are like a faithful mocking-bird
Amid the gloam of life's fast-fading light,
Whose strange and sweet love-lyrics still are heard
In brown boughs of the dim October night,

Or like a holly in the Christmas snows,
Still green when Summer verdure all is shed,
Or like an Autumn violet that blows
Beneath brown leaves, when other blooms are dead.

When we were young and gay, and you were fair,
We thought that love with youth would all be o'er,
But as I kiss your face, grown rough with care,
We find, dear heart, we never loved before.

THE KLONDIKE.

I

WRAPPED in a robe of everlasting snow,
Where icy blasts eternal revel hold,
Where gaunt pines shiver in the piercing cold,
Where mellow summer noontides never glow,
And sleety crags no springtime ever know —
Thus, like a miser, in his freezing fold,
The Arctic King has gathered heaps of gold
To lead deluded wanderers unto woe.

A Western Plain

So in his radiant diamond palace there,
Amid white splendors of his thousand thrones,
Where keen auroras glitter, blaze, and glare,
And like a Wandering Jew the wild wind moans,
He smiles at wretches in their last despair,
Who dig for gold among their comrades' bones.

II

About my home I see the springtime bloom,
The sheaves of summer or the autumn fruit ;
To make me glad, the robin lends his lute,
The lilies blossom, lilacs breathe perfume,
The red leaves flutter, golden asters loom.
Around me, tones of loved ones, never mute,
Are sweeter than the viol or the flute
Through June-time gladness or December gloom.

The daffodils their golden treasures pour
By lapfuls to my children as they play ;
The vines, with clustered rubies at my door,
Gladden my good wife through the livelong day ;
So in this humble nest, my wealth is more
Than all the gold and silver dug from clay.

1897.

A WESTERN PLAIN.

A LONELY white-washed farmhouse where I wait,
A sweep of swirling cornfields, far and nigh,
A flight of crows across a dreamy sky,
Fast-fading morning glories at the gate,
A lonesome field-lark seeking for his mate.
No hazy purple mountains meet the eye,
No giant white-capped ocean thunders by.
The land is quiet as the face of Fate.

Memorial Day

A craving for the mountains and the sea,
A pining and a waiting evermore ;
A longing for the crags and cascades free,
A yearning for the seaweeds of the shore ;
A hopeless hope, on cloud-swept cliffs to be,
To hear the stormy ocean billows roar.

MEMORIAL DAY.

O NCE more we gather under skies of May,
When lilac blossoms and when violet blows,
And on these grassy graves we twine a spray
Of Northern lily and of Southern rose.

Once more we hear the bluebird's song afloat,
The thrush's piping in the dewy dell ;
We thrill to hear the Northern robin's note,
And stand ensnared by Southern mock-bird's spell.

Once more the winds through odorous orchards blow,
The creamy hawthorns through the fences twine.
See ! all the sunrise splendors are aglow
Like cataracts of red and golden wine.

We bring a wreath, O martyrs numberless,
Who perished that your country still might live ;
Who fought and bled, the unborn babe to bless,
That we should still be brothers, and forgive.

But now we come, not as in bygone years,
When anger poisoned sorrow through and through ;
When no one cried, with blended love and tears,
“ Forgive them, for they know not what they do ! ”

Robert E. Lee

Thank God, those days have now forever passed,
With all their strife of party, clique and clan ;
The Northerner, the Southerner, at last
Is simply, solely an American.

On Santiago summits we unite
The grizzled foes of Chickamauga's day ;
The hatreds of a Shiloh sink from sight
Beneath the waters of Manila Bay.

Above your graves exultant anthems swell,
When Peace and Love have healed the battle's blows ;
We thrill with pride to think those fought so well
With these, so brave to overcome such foes.

Peace unto Grant, the advocate of peace,
To Stonewall, of the valor-vibrant name ;
Peace unto Lee, whose honors shall not cease,
To Lincoln, of the everlasting fame !

1899.

ROBERT E. LEE.

AS strong to smite as thunderbolts above,
And yet as gentle as a blameless dove.
O star of honor, flower of chivalry,
Our highest hope should be to be like thee.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

A BLEND of mirth and sadness, smiles and tears ;
A quaint knight-errant of the pioneers ;
A homely hero, born of star and sod ;
A Peasant-Prince ; a Masterpiece of God.

Fame

FAME.

IN early morning, when my heart was young,
I sought to woo and win Fame as my bride.
I saw her stand, high on a mountain side,
Fairer by far than angel songs have sung.
I called and called till cliffs and caverns rung,
And "All things come to him who waits!" I cried.
But time passed on, and still in vain I tried
With feeble footsteps and with faltering tongue.

At last around me fell the solemn night,
When all the morn's romance had passed away;
I ceased to seek her through the fading light,
When lo, my bride came at the close of day!
Alas! a poor old woman met my sight,
With wrinkled visage and with locks of gray.

ON A BEAUTIFUL PORTRAIT BY AN UNKNOWN ARTIST.

ASWEET face smiles upon me from this frame,
A high-born beauty, reigning long ago;
But not a record gives the artist's name;
His home, his country, none shall ever know.

O what an art to triumph o'er the tomb,
To keep the lovely face forever fair,
To keep that youth in everlasting bloom,
Defeating Death, and bidding Time despair!

Old age can never fade this virgin rose,
Nor mar that smile, which flits but never flies,
Nor fleck those tresses with December snows,
Nor dim the glory of those splendid eyes.

On a Beautiful Portrait by an Unknown Artist

The peaches of those cheeks are blushing still,
As in enchanted orchards long ago,
When some forgotten Autumn felt a thrill
Of mellow honey through its fruitage glow.

The cherries of those lips are ripe and red,
But still unplucked, and free from all decay,
Though poaching birds and bare-foot truants fled
As seasons came and pined and passed away.

Yet Artist, Artist, in thine ecstacy,
Thou hast forgotten all the world holds dear ;
Fame, fortune, power, all eluded thee,
No acclamations thou shalt ever hear.

Upon thy brow shall never rest a wreath,
No princely palm thy hand shall ever hold,
And thee, victorious over envious Death,
Oblivion's mantle ever shall enfold.

Day after day, mayhap, thy feet have gone
In weary, weary search for daily bread,
Or thou hast labored from the dusk till dawn,
And tears of anguish in a garret shed.

Yet Artist, Artist, in thine eager joy
Of toiling lovingly and toiling well,
Like some enthusiastic, ardent boy,
Thy thrill of triumph none can ever tell.

For he who saves from death the works of God,
Upon his shoulders feels the bud of wings,
Has plucked a blossom never sprung from sod,
Is greater than the greatest of the kings.

The Whistling Boy

THE WHISTLING BOY.

SO keen, so clear,
Falls on the ear
 The wild, sweet pipings of his lips,
So sharp, so tart,
I thrill and start,
 And Fancy tingles to her finger-tips.

The dingy town
With walls of brown,
 With grimy streets and pavements gray,
Its rush and roar
I note no more,
 And all its fierce commotions pass away.

Along the street
His brown, bare feet
 Remind me of a baby faun,
By fern-fringed pool
In shadows cool
 Leading a throng of fluting birds at dawn.

No hermit thrush
Through woodland hush
 Could trill a tune more fresh and free ;
No mocking bird
More gladly heard
 Through verdant vine-clad swamps of Tennessee.

I feel a breeze
Through cherry trees,
 O'er dandelions wet with dew,
And on a rail
I hear a quail
 Gladden an old peach orchard through and through.

The Death of a Flower

Through hazy tears
I see old years
When I too, happy as a bird,
By bubbling streams
Dreamed boyish dreams—
The dear, dead dreams, so sweet and so absurd.

THE DEATH OF A FLOWER.

UPON this dusty lane I pass you by,
O child of joy, O pure and pallid flower,
Panting alone beneath a parching sky,
Forever exiled from your native bower.

O beauteous blossom, all is lovely now,
When gardens still are green and skies still blue,
Before the young year wears a wrinkled brow,
And tender grasses lose their morning dew.

Alas, to think that you must pass away
Before the coming of your noble noon,
Before the blooming of the budding day,
Ere diamond skies have seen the death of June !

You answer “ It is better far to die
Before the glory of my youth is dead,
Ere winds of Autumn through the sedges sigh,
And all the splendor of the Summer fled.”

Yet, lovely blossom, you have died in vain ;
You languish here unloved and all alone ;
No tears are shed, consoling for your pain,
No hand restores you to your rightful throne.

But you reply : “ My mission now is done ;
A lover plucked me from the boughs above ;
The maiden of his heart and soul he won
By making me his messenger of love.

Zola

“ She kissed me often for her love of him,
Then let me in the dust forsaken lie ;
I felt mine eyes with tearful hazes dim ;
And so to make them happy, I shall die.”

Yet, fading flower, you have not one hope
Of life or light or joy beyond your tomb ;
You have no soul ; for you no heavens ope,
And when you die, you go to endless gloom.

But you reply : “ In truth, I can not tell
If I shall rise again before my Lord ;
But still the task He set is finished well,
Whether His hand might punish or reward.

“ And this one lesson hath my God made known :
Do good with gladness, neither led nor driven,
Loving the Good for sake of Good alone,
And not through fear of hell or hope of heaven.”

ZOLA.

HE comes in triumph to his native land,
A Conqueror by the power of the pen,
Whose voice was stronger than the steel-gloved hand,
Winning a battle with the minds of men.

Like Jacob, he was called upon by God
To throw aside the errors of his past,
To purge his weakness, struggle from the sod,
And fight through faults, triumphant at the last.

And though fanatics still revile his name,
Though not one palm is strewn upon his way,
Though bigot lips dispute his hard-won fame,
He is a monarch on this glorious day !

Little Sweetheart

For roses twine to deck a weakling's head,
Incenses burn to idols made of mud,
The palms are strewn to ease a despot's tread,
And laurel wreaths are made for men of blood.

To make him great, no souls were sacrificed,
No widow wept, no orphan's cheek grew pale,
For he has suffered in the cause of Christ,
And he has sought and found the Holy Grail.

Now, Paris, pressing back her vague alarms,
Uplifts her casque, and lays aside her lance ;
Rejoicing, there extend the eager arms
Of her, his lovely, once-disdainful France !

Though Gentile, Israel's Ruler summoned him
To right a persecuted people's wrongs,
And he shall live when distant ages dim
In Israel's stories and in Israel's songs.

Thy faults are overshadowed by thy fame,
O warrior who hast lifted Gideon's sword,
O Champion of the Chosen People's name,
O Captain in the legions of the Lord !

1899.

LITTLE SWEETHEART.

LITTLE sweetheart, years have passed
Since I walked beside you last,
Gazing in your eyes of blue,
As you promised to be true.

Love and Hope and Joy lie dead,
And my happy dreams have fled
Since I saw your face so fair
Through its haze of golden hair.

Little Sweetheart

All is lonesome, all is still
Where I used to hear your trill ;
Youth has lost its morning glow
Since I left you long ago.

Little sweetheart, life seems cold
As my heart and soul grow old,
And my faith is less and less
As I miss your old caress.

Slowly, slowly earth grows sere
As I wait and listen here
Vainly for the cadence sweet
Of your dear bare little feet.

Honor, power, wealth and fame
I have sought to deck my name,
But they all have proved untrue,
And I call in vain to you.

Little sweetheart, come to me,
As of old, so fresh and free,
In your little dress of white,
In your ribbons gay and bright !

Does your true heart ever yearn
For your lover to return ?
Shall I once more hear the beat
Of your dear bare little feet ?

Little sweetheart, let me know
If you love me still below —
Tell me, sweetheart, as I pass
Through your silent churchyard's grass.

For Mildred

FOR MILDRED.

O LOVELY maiden of the peach-bloom face,
So artless in thy morning mirthfulness,
O maiden tripping in unstudied grace,
This weary world to beautify and bless;

You bring strange memories to my callous heart,
Forgotten fancies from forsaken years,
Old joys, that long ago I saw depart
Amid the hazes of regretful tears.

You bring to mind those dear departed Springs,
Those Summers that evanished evermore,
A halcyon youth, whose head and feet had wings
In lost rose-gardens of the years of yore.

You bring to mind the days of dead romance,
When my young heart was like a dewy flower,
When song and story centered in a glance,
And pain was but a passing April shower.

How all is changed ! The fairy stories close,
The fields are faded, dull the skies above ;
The life that once was poetry, is prose ;
None seek me now to bring me gifts of love.

I do not wonder as I gaze at thee,
How Helen thrilled the nations far and wide,
How Cleopatra weaved her witchery,
Till heroes for her glory bled and died.

For such as you were levelled walls of Troy,
And Actium's ships were wrapped in sheeted flame,
With fire and sword were ravaged realms of joy,
Leaving great cities but a storied name.

So then, remember that thy subtle power
Is like a magic sceptre in thy hands,
To rear to God upon a rock a tower,
Or scatter hopes like houses built on sands.

The Morning Glory

So, when the One of All shall come to woo,
Remember thou canst make him or canst mar,
His love in ashes and in dust to strew,
Or fix his aspirations on a star.

Within thy heart, ere youth has flitted by,
Let Love, the Rose, its blossom never cease,
Beneath it place the Violet, Modesty,
And high above them all the Lily, Peace.

Amid the blessings that to thee are given,
Let Self upon thy shrine be sacrificed,
Becoming then the blessed bride of Heaven,
Daughter of God, and sister unto Christ.

THE MORNING GLORY.

MORNING glory, morning glory,
Fragile as a fairy story,
Robed in gowns of purple and of white and red,
Diademed with dew,
There are none so fair as you,
Empress of the world of blossoms ere the youth of day is
dead.

Lovely handmaid of the morning,
Lowly earthly scenes adorning,
An enchantress who is peerless and is proud,
Decked in brilliant blooms,
Like the silks of Tyrian looms,
Or the oriental splendors of a spangled sunrise cloud.

But amid the noonday splendor
Fade away your bosoms tender,
As the dewdrops vanish from your feverish face ;
So you pant and pine,
Ere the dazzling day's decline,
Losing all your glow of color and your gladsomeness and
grace.

The Witch of the Wineglass

So I ponder and remember
In a green and gold September,
I have seen a maiden fair and frail as you ;
But she drooped and died,
As you perish in your pride,
For the blithest and the brightest vanish with the morning dew.

Morning glory, morning glory,
From her tombstone old and hoary,
Do your dying blossoms go to meet her there ?
There in marvelous morn,
Plucking roses with no thorn,
In the empire of the angels, does she heed my heart's despair ?

So I bless you now, and kiss you ;
Tell her, " Darling, how I miss you !
If in heaven you are treading, sweet, to-day,
Does your bosom thrill
When you hear I love you still,
And are you still faithful, sweetheart, to your lover far away ? "

THE WITCH OF THE WINEGLASS.

ROBED like an empress of almighty Rome,
 I see a sweet seducer in her lair,
With creamy bosoms, light as flakes of foam,
 And yellow roses in her yellow hair.

A flush of fervor decks the queen of sin
 With all an Autumn sunset's gorgeous dyes,
And Passion, like a panther, glares within
 The emerald-golden splendor of her eyes.

Around her palace door, the glossy vines
 Are bending with mellifluous grapes of gold,
The marble steps are splashed with purple wines,
 Like blood-stained altars of the days of old.

The Witch of the Wineglass

A poppy seems to blossom in her lips,
Bearing the poison of enchanted sleep,
A leopard's velvet seem her finger-tips,
To stroke her victim ere she makes her leap.

She comes to greet me with a glass of wine,
Mellow and sparkling, flecked with flakes of foam,
And murmurs, "Drink, and thou shalt be divine;
Come, make this bosom and this heart thy home!"

She comes to meet me on a Summer day,
With blue and orange banners waved on high,
With blue and orange blossoms on her way,
A blue and orange morning in the sky.

I kiss her on her fervent mouth of flame,
And swear to love and serve her evermore,
To perish with her, deaf to voice of blame,
As countless sons of men have done before.

But years glide by, and I am growing old,
My footsteps totter through the fields of gray,
My soul is weary, and my heart is cold,
And all my hopes of heaven have passed away.

Her marble palace, shattered in the dust,
Is draped with brown sprays of her withered vines,
Her golden diadem is dim with rust,
Amid her ruined columns she repines.

Her songs are now but lamentations loud,
As Desolation follows in her track,
Her festal robes are now a funeral shroud,
And all her brilliant banners now are black.

Her golden locks are sprinkled now with snows,
Her blandishments of beauty all are dead;
My heart, like hers, is but a withered rose,
My soul, like hers, a Summer that has fled.

La Paloma

LA PALOMA.*

O PEERLESS love-song of the golden South,
Melodious lyric of the lands of light,
Warm as the kisses from a wooing mouth,
As brilliant as the dawn and sad as night !

I see the vine-clad tropic mountains there,
The birds of gorgeous plumage flitting by,
The tangled forest and the panther's lair,
The dark-blue ocean and the dark-blue sky.

I see the star-eyed Spanish damsel there,
A blood-red cactus on her beauteous breast,
And dazzling diamonds in her dusky hair,
Like a proud peacock's iridescent crest.

And close beside the daughter of old Spain,
I see her lover of the years of yore,
I feel the fierce heart-hunger of his pain,
When peace and rest have fled forevermore.

O lover, lover, cease thy sobs and sighs !
Soft sleep deserts us when our souls adore ;
For those who love not are the truly wise,
And those who love are happy nevermore.

O lover, lover, she must soon grow old ;
Her stately step will be no longer proud ;
Her heart will crumble in the churchyard mould,
And dewy dark eyes vanish in her shroud.

O lover, lover, in her coffin low,
The pure white flowers will wither on her breast,
That fair, fair breast whose love you longed to know,
Forgotten like a swan's forsaken nest.

But still thy passion leaps to mine own heart,
Thy grief, thy joy, thy clasping and thy kiss,—

*"The Dove," a Spanish-American love-song.

Richard Mansfield

Love's honeyed whispers and his poisoned dart,
His thorns among the roses of his bliss.

And when I hearken to thy melodies
I feel thine anguish in my bosom burn,—
The pangs of gazing into dark brown eyes,—
And pine to love and be loved in return.

O lover, lover, though thy heart and hand
Are crumbling clay amid the charnel rust,
They come to haunt me in this Northern land
Till I, like thee, am ashes and am dust.

Yet, lover, lover, cease thy sobs and sighs ;
Soft sleep deserts us when our souls adore ;
For those who love not are the truly wise,
And those who love are happy nevermore.

RICHARD MANSFIELD.

THE age of chivalry has passed away,
With all the old-time glories we adored ;
Where once the poet's melodies outpoured
The sordid market murmurs day by day ;
Where lovers tripped along to greet the May,
The tradesman gloats above his glutted hoard ;
The yardstick now is mightier than the sword,
And Art the beck of Commerce must obey.

Now Poesie, a sweet and lovely slave,
Feels on her cheek a tyrant's lashes smart.
But here one knight dares beard the bloated knave,
Nor cringes for that master of the mart ;—
A modern Cyrano, superb and brave,
Facing a hundred venal foes of Art !

A Cuban Sword

A CUBAN SWORD.

RELIC OF THE TEN YEARS' WAR.

I LIKE to see this old and honest blade,
The faithful comrade of a patriot bold.
They say that all things now must cringe to gold,
Be measured by the sordid rules of trade ;
They say the old ideals all must fade,
That old-time faith and friendship lose their hold ;
They say that love may now be bought and sold,
While dreams of poets laughing-stocks are made.

This sword like lightning on its foemen fell ;
No tyrant's gold its sturdy steel could buy.
So this is what the brave old blade shall tell,
Giving to sordid, base-born souls the lie :—
To love thy fellow-man, and love so well,
That thou art willing for his sake to die.

PAST AND PRESENT.

YOU said you loved me, when my heart was gay,
When Fortune was a guest within my door ;
But will you love me in this gloaming gray,
When others, whom I cherished, love no more ?

Who needs a friend when Fortune is his friend ?
Who needs a guide through sunlit fields ablaze ?
But when disasters gather in the end,
Where is the hand to lead me through the gloom ?

Love, how I need you ! As the Summer grain
Needs benediction of God's golden light,
As fading foliage needs the rippling rain,
As wan moonflowers need the soothing night.

Past and Present

I ask you, " Do you love me ? " Not as then,
When Life was laughing, wreathed with roses red,
But now, when darkness drapes the world of men,
And all the splendors of my youth have sped.

Then, like a brilliant cactus blazed the noon,
And twilight flitted like a brown-eyed fawn,
Then, like a white swan sailed the May-night moon,
And like a purple poppy flamed the dawn.

Young April, in her girlish frock of green,
Blonde August, with her glory-gleaming eyes,
Brunette October, like an Arab queen,
And gray December, with his gloomy skies,—

These with their flowers and snowflakes strewed the ground
In jest and joyance through the years of yore ;
Love's lilies blossomed all the year around,
His birds went sweetly singing evermore.

But like Aladdin when he lost his lamp,
I saw my childhood's palace pass away ;
So then, forsaken, I was forced to tramp
All weary, worn and footsore, day by day.

Yet as I grope through ebon glooms of night
And know a jasmine by its rich perfume,
So, sweet, I know you in this fading light,
A princess, come to share a peasant's doom !

And like a crystal palace in the heart
Which keeps through Winter warmth of Summer
noons,
Love's tropic splendors never shall depart,
Still glowing through their everlasting Junes.

The Laurels

Then come to me, O precious, as of old,
Bring back the brilliance of the perished years,
Bring back the glory of my age of gold,
And end my exile in the realm of tears.

Then we shall lose the false for real bliss ;
True love turns not when fickle youth forsakes ;
A fairy prince, beneath his ardent kiss
The Sleeping Beauty of the soul awakes.

THE LAURELS.

ALONG the noisy city streets I go,
Unknown, unheeded by the careless throng ;
But in my heart I feel a morning glow,
And on my lips the spirit of a song.

All unbefriended, I receive no smiles,
And feel no pressure of a helping hand ;
Yet I have journeyed for a thousand miles
To win a triumph in this alien land.

But lo ! Success awaits me as my bride,
Crowned with a crown of gold, and robed in white,
And there I see my handmaids at her side,
Fame on her left and Fortune on her right.

O high-born lady, I have come to woo,
And I shall win you by the force of will ;
Do not deny me ! When I come for you,
No fortress can withstand my strength and skill.

What though the rabble turns away from me ?
What though my rights have been withheld for years ?
That rabble shall my brilliant victory see,
And change their servile hisses into cheers.

The Soldier of Fortune

What though pretenders now usurp my throne ?
What though impostors now my sceptre wield ?
I bravely come to battle for my own,
And charlatans who trespass all must yield.

What though my heart has felt corroding care ?
What though I wince from iron fangs of want ?
My soul will grapple with, and choke Despair,
And strangle Hunger, through his jaws be gaunt.

What though I clutch with pinching poverty ?
What though the honors now are claimed by knaves ?
All foes were raised before my face to flee,
And all privations born to be my slaves.

Chance, stand aside ! I do not bow to you ;
Success, strew laurels, and my triumph sing !
Behold, you now shall give me tribute due,
And make obeisance to your rightful king !

THE SOLDIER OF FORTUNE.

I SEEK for gold in Klondike mountain snow,
And diamonds in the Transvaal waste afar ;
I dive for pearls where Ceylon currents flow,
And gather furs beneath the polar star.

I hook the spouting whale in seas to south,
I gather corals by Sicilian strands ;
I hunt for amber at the Baltic's mouth,
And ivory far beyond Sahara sands.

A bare-foot boy, I leave the prosy farm
To make my fortune in the marts of men ;
With not a friend but one unconquered arm
I beard the Monster, London, in his den.

The Soldier of Fortune

In rags and tatters, seeking wealth and fame,
I sweat, I struggle over all to rise ;
I fight, I bleed, I win a noble name,
And stab my Evil Fortune till he dies.

A beggar lad, I carve, I sing, I paint,
Till laurel leaf and myrtle bough are mine ;
Supernal Beauty, free from mortal taint,
Beneath my brush and chisel wakes divine.

Unknown, disdained, I strike the poet's lyre,
And maidens scatter roses in my path ;
A peasant soldier, under fiercest fire,
I snatch a red wreath from the brow of Wrath.

I am the slayer of the dragon Fear ;
The traitor, Chance, must cringe to me as lord ;
All foes are frightened when my name they hear,
All opposition flees before my sword.

Why should I quail because a woman frowns ?
Why should I whine because she turns away ?
I am no trailer after girlish gowns ;
Maids were not born to rule me, but obey.

A world of women waits me to be won,
And woman's kisses are the victor's right ;
I cull the loveliest under every sun,
Beneath the Southern Cross or Northern Light.

All things are mine. I do not fear or flinch.
All fruits, all flowers I claim by right of birth.
I fear no foe ; I never yield an inch ;
I conquer all the Kingdoms of the earth.

Toiler and Idler

TOILER AND IDLER.

THE laborer is the great high-priest of God,
Creator like the Lord who gave him breath,
The father of all fruits, spouse of the sod,
The friend of life, and enemy of death.
But he who toils not, bears a shriveled soul,
Is fit for deserts, or for realms of rocks ;
For him no victor's palm, no race, no goal,
Mate for the sloth, true brother to the ox.

The man who tills the fields breathes wholesome air,
And sleeps a sleep remorse can not affright ;
His peace of mind is stranger to despair,
His freedom unconfined as morning light.
What though the Summer glares with scorching heat ?
That Winter winds his blood and bone may chill ?
His manhood scatters hardships in defeat,
And every battle makes him stronger still.

The brown bee flits amid the clover there,
To make him gifts of golden honeycomb ;
For him the cherry and the plum and pear,
The grapevine swinging on his happy home.
For him the daisy dripping with the dew,
Peach-blooms above and cowslips at his feet ;
For him the green grass and the skies of blue,
The scarlet poppies and the golden wheat.

For him are thrushes warbling in delight
On breezes tripping lightly as a fawn ;
For him the swan-like noonday's wings of white,
The pansy twilight and the primrose dawn.
For him, Spring like a virgin violet blooms,
And Summer blossoms like a yellow rose,
Then Autumn like an orange aster looms,
And Winter comes, a lily of the snows.

Toiler and Idler

The tiller owns no master but his God,
And earns by right a heritage divine ;
A prophet, striking dust with potent rod,
His plow makes earth gush honey, milk, and wine.
His hillocks are the altars of the Lord,
His granary like a pious temple stands ;
The kingdom of the earth his rich reward,
The scythe becomes a scepter in his hands.

But he, who, discontented with that lot,
Tramps through the city, vainly begging work,
Shall find his rosy dreams a wretched blot,
Facing worse evils than he sought to shirk.
O pity not the tiller of the soil,
But pity him, the straggler of the street ;
O pity not the hardened hands of toil,
Remembering this poor wanderer's wayworn feet !

At night the keen winds pierce his threadbare coat,
The rain beats hard down on his dizzy head ;
Half-mad, half-starved, he begs a rusty groat,
When hope and pride from shivering soul have fled.
He sees the street-lamps dripping in the rain,
The engine hoarsely thundering through the night ;
The dragon Town is heedless of his pain,
And spits upon him in his piteous plight.

He lounges in the city parks, and sees
Ten thousand like himself, in dirt and rags —
Poor stranded wrecks by seas of miseries,
Surrendered ships, with tattered conquered flags !
Night comes again, and hungry still, he goes
Half-crazed for lack of sleep, in dull despair,
To freeze to death when fall the Winter snows,
Or plunge, self-murdered, in the river there.

The idler is a menace unto heaven,
A misery to himself, a foe to man,

The Right to Work

Unsettled, discontented, dumbly driven,
Drainer of life-blood since the world began.
No burden breaks the back like idleness,
No toil is half so hard, no strain so great,
No curse of care has half so much distress,
No armored foe a more portentous threat.

Ashamed of toil, he wooes no fruits from earth,
He beggars those who look to him for aid,
And spurred by foolish pride, scorns homely worth,
Longing for camp and court, for reeking blade.
He can not blame one being but himself
If he should crawl with creatures of the mud ;
For he who plows is more than prince of pelf,
A nobler Knight than any man of blood.

THE RIGHT TO WORK.

THREE is work for all the millions, whether on the sea or land ;
Every human being's birthright brings a task unto his hand.

Earth is ready for the toilers who may come to sow and reap,
Ready for the delving miner, for the sailor on the deep.

There are golden grains to garner, there are silver mines to dig,
There are gardens of the melon, orchards of the peach and fig.

There are pearls for every diver, corals waiting in the caves,
There is wealth of mellow amber in the sweep of ocean waves.

The Right to Work

There are purpled-treasured vineyards, dangling with delicious wines,
Hives that overflow with honey, woods of oaks and elms and pines.

There is work in forge and furnace, manufactory and mill,
Work in farm and work in foundry, street of city, country hill.

Work for poet, work for painter, work for him who carves and sings,
Coming with an inspiration like the touch of angel wings.

And that longing for their labor in the freemen's hearts shall be
Like the green blood of the spring time, tingling in the turf and tree.

They are coming not as beggars, but as men demanding work ;
Not as vagabonds or vagrants, but as men who scorn to shirk.

They are mouthing not for Mercy,—Justice only they demand,
For the right to share the blessings of their great Creator's hand.

Not for alms these men are asking, but the right to share the earth,
Right to build, create, to chisel, right to claim their royal birth.

But the Masters of the Market, bloated with their sense of might,
Seek to wring from struggling brothers this their immemorial right.

As in brutal barbarous ages, they have dealt in souls of men,
And humanity is bartered in these latter days as then.

The Right to Work

In their train is heard the murmur of a thousand million
slaves,
And behind them is a desert of a thousand million graves.

So the tramp, the prowling vagrant, maddened for the want
of bread,
Makes a beggar, thief or robber, sears with shame his chil-
dren's head.

So the homeless, hungry outcast, stealing sleepless through
the night,
Seeks in suicide a refuge from a world where Might is Right.

So at last the ruined woman, once unscarred by brand of
blame,
Walks the streets of wicked cities, dealing in a life of shame.

Lo ! the Masters of the Market dine from gold and silver
plate,
Parks and palaces surround them in their insolence of state.

They have seized the fruits of labor, snatched the bread
from those who toiled,
They have crushed the patient peasant, all his vineyards
have despoiled.

While they seek their selfish pleasures, Lazarus at their
gateway lags,
While their wives are decked with jewels, peasant wives
are hung with rags.

While their darling dogs are petted, children cry from woe-
ful want,
While their stables all are sumptuous, men go wandering
pinched and gaunt.

They deny to manly merit this one right to manly toil,
They deny to God's own children God's own fruits of sea
and soil.

An Unsent Letter

Let them tremble! in the future looms the iron face of
Fate;

Let them tremble! no intrenchments shall protect their
guilty state.

For the wrath of millions gathers in an overwhelming flood,
And their march shall be resistless, and their cry be
“Bread or Blood!”

AN UNSENT LETTER.

YELLOW and worn after long, long years,
Hiding its treasures of smiles and tears,
Breathing soft odors from days of old,
Sweetest of stories, yet still untold !

Whispers I hear from the faded sheet,
Saying “I love you, I love you, sweet !
Foolishly fond though my words may be,
Tell me, O tell me, if you love me !”

Love then was light as feet of a fawn,
Brilliant of brow as dazzle of dawn,
Jocund as June, unwearied of wing,
Hearing his heart like a goldfinch sing.

Life was as sweet as a seraph's bliss,
Youth was a dream, a dimple, a kiss,—
Beautiful girls and beautiful boys,
Jubilant smiles and jubilant joys !

Tattered alone in the garret here,
Breathing its tidings of hope and fear,
After the writer grows old and gray,
After his passion has passed away.

In Praise of Myself

Did the maiden watch with anxious eyes,
Pining away with her secret sighs,
Treading alone with her dead dull pain,
Waiting your coming, but still in vain ?

Never, O never, love's clasp and kiss,
Never, O never, love's honeyed bliss,
Never, O never, love's Summer sun
Came to the hearts that should have been one.

Over the earth he wanders alone,
Callous and cold and cynical grown ;
She who should be a mother and wife
Faces alone a long loveless life.

Silent in dust you will sleep at last,
After dull years of waiting have passed.
Shall you meet some day in God's own fold,
And the words of love at last be told ?

IN PRAISE OF MYSELF.

I AM sick of the lays of love, of the prating of beautiful eyes,
Of the ruby lips, of the golden hair, and of cheeks like morning skies ;
For a day will dawn when the eyes grow dim, and the ringlets of gold are gray,
And Love, like a traitor, when wrinkles come, will silently sneak away.

I am weary of lays of Friendship, too, of the truth that never turns,
Of the trusting hearts and the helping hands, the faith that forever burns ;
For when Fate may frown, and when Fortune flies, and your golden age is done,
You will find at last, wherever you go, there is left of your friends not one.

In Praise of Myself

I am weary alike of Prayer, of beseeching of pitiless skies,
Of the wails for help, of the shrieks for aid as the wretch
in anguish dies ;
For the gods help those who uplift the sword, not those who
as beggars come,
To the rich they give, from the poor they take, to the weak
are deaf and dumb.

Whenever you hang on another's arm, the soul of your
strength is past ;
When you give your fate to another's hands, the die of
your doom is cast ;
Whenever you mumble for mercy here, the day of defeat
draws nigh ;
Whenever you weep, whenever you wail, you are left to
droop and die.

Whenever you win a battle of life, reap riches or gain
renown,
No hand but your own on the flaming field will place on
your head the crown.
If the palms you bear, if the bays you wear, if you heap
and hoard your pelf,
No finger will lift from a friendly arm till first you have
helped yourself.

I care not what men or women may say when of outside
aid they tell,
For work others do can never suit you — you only can do it
well.
And I know this truth, that if win I will, I must win by
force of might ;
What gift I may crave, what reward I seek, I lose if I do
not fight.

Whatever a friend may do for a friend is only reflected light,
From the sun of Self, of splendor the source, and without
which all is night.

In Praise of Myself

Whenever the fang of a foeman stings, infection never takes place

Unless I myself have poisoned myself, nourishing grafted disgrace.

So I praise myself for fights I have fought, for the enemies underfoot hurled,

And I love myself and I hug myself as I face a hostile world ;

And I praise myself that I heeded not the hisses and hoots and jeers,

And with bulldog grip have clung to my rights through all of the friendless years.

Though I blundered oft and I stumbled oft while bleeding from thrust on thrust,

I have faced all foes, have endured all blows, have risen when hurled to dust.

Though many my faults, and my passions strong, and sins of self were to down,

I have forged ahead, and my brow deserves, though never it wear, a crown.

So I praise myself for the fights I fought against all the hosts of hell,

Though I knew at last was a greedy grave, and a shroud and funeral bell.

I have trod the path which, I know not why, leads on to the lonely tomb,

And never a man or seraph or saint more boldly has marched to doom.

I care not what sage or sophist might do, what higher beings might say,

What counsel of man, what wisdom of God, may have shown a better way ;

Had they fought like me, had they bled like me as they crept through earth to die,

I would challenge them all to take up my lot and bear it better than I.

The Spouse of Art

I have asked for aid from the sons of men—they have left
me all alone;

I have prayed the gods for a loaf of bread—they have
always given a stone.

So I clenched my teeth, and doubled my fists, and I fought
to hold my own,

And the mobs of men, when I helped myself, have begged
me accept a throne.

So little I care if they say my words are vanity, pomp or
conceit,

For I know that Self and that Self alone, can bring me a
mess of meat.

So the little tin gods of the old-time bards I shove in dust
on the shelf,

And asking no leave of a living soul, I take off my hat to
myself.

THE SPOUSE OF ART.

I

ALL others I forsake to wed with thee;
I heed not calls of comrades, maiden's kiss,
The reveler's rapture or the lover's bliss,
Or clasp of children nestling on my knee.
Thy flowerful yoke is dearer unto me
Than all the freedom I shall ever miss.
I brave the cynic's smile, the rabble's hiss,
The numb neglect, the pangs of poverty.

Though wealth and pomp and power all have fled
Since Life conceived and love for thee gave birth,
My soul, long lost on deserts parched and red,
Hath found thy green oasis in the dearth,
And there thy springs, with palms arched overhead,
Console for all the fruits and flowers of earth.

The Spouse of Art

II

All mortal spouses soon must pass away,
While thou shalt be forever young and fair;
No snows shall ever sprinkle in thy hair,
Nor blue eyes dim and dull to ashen gray.
No Autumn shall besiege thy morns of May,
No Winter lay thy leafy bowers bare;
To slay thy smiles, no frowns shall weave a snare,
No wrinkles fret thy dimples at their play.

The earth-born son or daughter droops and dies,
May trudge deformed, may sink to sin or shame;
But offspring of thy bosom shall arise
Like star-crowned seraphs, flushed with Morning's flame,
With dream-dim faces and resplendent eyes,
To add their blissful beauty to my fame.

III

All other glories are not worth thy gloom,
All other grandeurs are not worth thy grief;
No crown of King is worth thy laurel leaf,
No throne is worth thy follower's glorious tomb.
Thy brambles seem to me a bower of bloom,
Thy very tares become a golden sheaf.
Matched with thy reign, the Hapsburg rule is brief,
Thy palms more proud than Philip Sidney's plume.

Though witching warblers throng in elm and oak,
Thy marvelous melodies leave others mute;
Beside thee, northern winds may pierce my cloak,
Yet seem more soft than any lay of lute.
O Art, in youth, at dawn, I thee invoke,
And thee at sunset, dying I salute.

Idyl of Spring

IDYL OF SPRING.

THRUSHES up there in branches of blossom
Twitter and trill to swaying of trees;
Rose's red heart and lily-bell's bosom
Tingle with buzzing and boom of bees.

Over the way, where with billows of bloom
Creamy and pink as a cloud of pearls,
Apple and peach in loveliness loom,
Linda goes laughing, my girl of girls.

Linda, my lass of but sixteen years,
Glides with the grace of a floating flower,
Stranger to sorrow, untaught in tears,
Fairest of fays in the bud-scattered bower.

Standing alone in her frock of white,
Sprinkled with snows of the plum-tree blooms,
Stainless and sweet, she is crowned with light,
Seeming a seraph with folded plumes.

Pigeons of gray and purple and green,
Burnished with copper and blue and brown,
Flutter beside the feet of my queen,
Swirling and sweeping to touch her gown.

Treading there too is a peacock proud,
Gaudy with gems like a Hindoo King,
Spreading his train like a rainbow cloud,
Switching the grass with his lowered wing.

Moments flit fast, and my Linda goes
Out of my sight, and she takes away
Out of my spring the red of the rose,
Mirth of my morn, delight of my day.

May-apples budding beneath her feet
Chalices lift of whitest of wax,

A May-Night Memory

Seeming to show that her footsteps fleet
Left them behind to trace out her tracks.

Morning may glow like a pearly shell,
Purple and pink and iris and blue,
Dangling with dews the sweet-scented dell,
Linda, my lass, yet I yearn for you.

A MAY-NIGHT MEMORY.

THE pale moonbeams from crystal chalices
Stream through the golden-blossomed tulip-trees ;
A bridal barge, with snow-white silken sails,
The creamy locust waves in gentle gales.

I thrill with warm pulsations of her breath,
An odor sweeter than a lilac wreath,
And spell-bound, like a bird within a snare,
I feel the fragrance of her loosened hair.

Her eyes are like wee blue-birds that are mates,
Her hands like white doves at the pearly gates ;
Her bosom, like a pure magnolia bloom,
Heaves in the dimness of enchanted gloom.

I know I only wander in a dream,
Yet haunted by her bygone beauties, seem
To faint from odors of her sweet, sweet breath,
As frail as buds in waxen hands of death.

AT SUNSET.

THE star of evening there on high
Breaks into pearly bloom,—
The Easter lily of the sky
In dim cathedral gloom.

Poe's Cottage at Fordham

POE'S COTTAGE AT FORDHAM.

HERE stands the little antiquated house,
A few old-fashioned flowers at the door ;
The dead Past leaves it, quiet as a mouse,
Though just beyond a giant city roar.

See here the curious porch, the attic there,
The quaint square window with its awkward blind,
The weather-beaten wall, so blank and bare,
And shadowed by an apple tree behind.

Within this room Virginia lay when ill,
A black cat nestling there to warm her feet ;
And so she languished, growing paler still,
And shivering as the winds of Winter beat.

And here her mother through the long, long night
Watched ever by the poor consumptive's side.
Here by the smoky lamp's low-flickering light
They looked upon Virginia when she died.

And here it was they wrapped her in her shroud,
And hence they took her through the falling snow.
So on this old house closed at last the cloud
That haunts it still with griefs of long ago.

And here the poet's life grew darker still
As dream by dream had vanished into air ;
Here day by day grew weaker yet his will,
As golden hopes were rusted in despair.

But here were born those strains that can not die,
Romances that shall rule the human heart.
Here Fame, whose summer hears no autumn sigh,
Shall rear immortal marbles to his art.

Here Ligeia haunts us with enchanting eyes,
We catch the rustle of Morella's gown ;
Here Usher treads, and William Wilson dies,
And Israfel sings Poe's supreme renown.

Will You Love Me Still?

WILL YOU LOVE ME STILL ?

DEAR heart, I can not spare thee from my side,
I look to thee when wrecked and tempest-tost,
O thou still faithful when my hopes have died,
Friend of the fallen, lover of the lost.

Though Sin hath bound me, wilt thou break the snare ?
Though glooms may gather, wilt thou bide with me ?
And though Dejection lures me to his lair,
Wilt thou, O true love, come to set me free ?

Like hapless Norma in her dark despair
Seeking to slay her gold-haired girls and boys,
My soul had raised its deadly dagger there,
To pierce the bosoms of its old-time joys.

But thou like David with his soothing strains,
Coming to calm the stormy soul of Saul,
Canst quell the tempest of my poignant pains,
Till rainbow gladness arches over all.

When foemen gather I will feel no fear,
Though sorely tempted and though sorely tried,
If thou wilt whisper, "Courage, courage, dear !
Remember, true heart, I am by thy side !"

Ah, thou shalt ease me of my weight of woe,
My one true hope when other hopes are dead ;
Ah, thou shalt be my Northern Star aglow,
The one true friend when other friends have fled.

Come quickly, like a brave Joan of Arc,
My shattered banners in the breeze to fling,
To bear a touch of courage through the dark,
And win the lost crown for your ruined King.

A February Sunset

A FEBRUARY SUNSET.

BESIDE this frozen marsh the sedges sigh,
While keen-edged winds like sabres cut their way ;
A water-fowl is floating there on high,
Seeking some far-off home at close of day.

The ghostly hills are shrouded white in snow,
Brown boughs, a-shiver nakedly, are numb ;
A wandering black-robed friar, limps a crow,
To find on hardened clods a stingy crumb.

Here weeds and brambles, thickly interlaced,
Hang frail embroidery of hoary frost ;
Here tiny tracks of hares are lightly traced ;
A crying snow-bird seeks the mate he lost.

A herd of cows goes stumbling up the hill,
Sunk to their knees in drifts like billowed foam ;
Waving a stick and whistling sharp and shrill,
A red-cheeked farmer-boy directs them home.

Near by, the haggard wild-rose bushes spread,
Like bristling porcupines of prong and thorn ;
A lonesome leaf, where other leaves have fled,
Is all a-shiver, faded and forlorn.

A cottage rises in the fields of white,
Its smoke is curling tremulous and thin ;
Its windows glow like jaspers through the night,
Rich with the warmth of blissful love within.

There like a dewdrop in a scarlet flower
A star is twinkling in the ruddy sky,
And sprinkling snow-fields in a silver shower,
The new moon's horn of plenty hangs on high.

The sunset splendor makes the twilight glow
In purple and in orange clouds of fire,
As conquering Alexander long ago
Gave to the torch imperial towers of Tyre.

A February Sunset

The world seems woeful, all its laughter lost,
The golden dreams of June forever dead,
No bird, no bud, it seems could brave this frost,
No May-time resurrect the foliage fled.

And yet the landscape seems expecting Spring,
The harsh north wind seems chanting prophecy,
As though a dead man felt an angel's wing,
And smiled to know his soul could never die.

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